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MAGAZINE

Whole lot of Show

Princess Diana accused by critics of Britain's 'fake society'

By ALEXANDRA FREAN AND PETER FOSTER

A LEADING academic has provoked outrage and debate with an article in which he castigates Diana, Princess of Wales, for being a childlike and self-obsessed sentimentalist with no proper understanding of her royal role.

In a trenchant critique of the Princess and her lifestyle, Professor Anthony O'Hear, a philosophy lecturer at Bradford University, condemns her for elevating "feeling, image and spontaneity over reason, reality and restraint". He

suggests that her "obsession with her own feelings and her self-development" might have damaged the Monarchy, her marriage, her children and, ultimately, herself.

The Professor's attack is published today in *Faking It, The Sentimentalisation of Society*, a collection of 12 essays published by the right-wing Social Affairs Unit. The essays depict Britain as a morally bankrupt society in which the old-fashioned values of duty and self-reliance have been replaced with a decadent and debilitating sentimentalism. The book's

editors, Digby Anderson and Peter Mullen, maintain that today's Britain is neither modern nor cool. "It is a fake society with fake institutions," they say. "The society's defining moment was Princess Diana's funeral, in which sentimentality — mob grief — was personified and canonised, the elevation of feelings above reason, reality and restraint."

Professor O'Hear, who is honorary director of the Royal Institute of Philosophy, wrote his essay soon after the funeral — which he, too, described as a defining moment in British history. "This was the most

phenomenal event in recent times and I was trying to make sense of it," he said.

The Professor insisted that he did not intend his essay to be a personal attack on the Princess, whom he never met, and claimed that much of what he said would apply to anyone who was self-obsessed. "We are all entitled to our opinions on her because she is a public figure." But while conceding that there was something touching in the way the Princess reached out to the socially excluded, the professor believes that her insistence on presenting herself as a victim and

on identifying with society's victims was merely a way of avoiding her responsibilities.

She indulged in "infantile" temper tantrums and forced the rest of the Royal Family to "put up with her childlike self-centredness", he claims. It was distasteful of her to complain during her divorce: "I do not know any other woman in the land who has to put up with her mother-in-law calling the shots."

The fact that her mother-in-law was the Queen of England and not just any interfering relative made everything different, the Professor writes. "Not to see this, and not to

see that Diana herself was not just 'any other woman in the land' is to fail to see what monarchy is all about."

In other essays on religion, medicine, media, the environment and even eating habits, the book claims that sentimentality and fake feelings have pervaded British society. It concludes that we now live in a "self-indulgent civilisation which cannot tell image from reality".

Mr Mullen said: "We are trying to say that sentimentality is like the smell of a rotting corpse throughout society. All of our institutions

have glorified fake feelings and indulged in a Disneyfication of feelings and intelligence." The authors wanted to see a return to realism and self-reliance.

Professor O'Hear's essay was, however, roundly condemned last night by charities and friends of the Princess. Lord St John of Fawsley, one of the Princess's admirers, described it as biased and one-sided. "Diana's relationships with the Queen were always cordial and close, and she always paid great respect to the Queen's wishes. She had a child-like simplicity, but

Continued on page 2, col 4

Westland links with helicopter rivals

By CARL MORTSHED AND PHILIP WEBSTER

WESTLAND, the Somerset company that rocked the Tory government and took Margaret Thatcher to the brink of resignation, is set to become the world's second largest helicopter maker through a deal with an Italian rival.

The European defence alliance that was championed by Michael Heseltine in the mid-1980s but opposed by his Prime Minister is at last about to happen.

Twelve years after the most ferocious Cabinet battle of the Thatcher years led to the resignation of Mr Heseltine and his arch-rival Leon Brittan, Westland is to link up with Agusta of Italy.

The agreement between GKN, Westland's parent, and Finmeccanica will create a rival to Boeing of America, the world's biggest aircraft manufacturer.

At the height of the Westland crisis in January 1986 Mrs Thatcher faced the Commons in an emergency debate. She confided to colleagues that morning that by the evening she might no longer be Prime Minister.

The Westland saga suddenly erupted when the financially-strapped company sought a rescue deal with the American helicopter maker Sikorsky. The deal-out was opposed by Mr Heseltine, then Defence Secretary, who wanted to promote a European consortium

rescue involving British Aerospace as well as French, German and Italian interests, including Agusta.

The clash exposed a deep ideological rift in the Cabinet, pitting Mr Heseltine against Mr Brittan, then Trade and Industry Secretary, who wanted the American rescue to proceed. Mr Heseltine resigned in protest, went into the wilderness and later mounted a leadership challenge which led to [now Baroness] Thatcher's downfall.

Yesterday's deal is unlikely to create a political furor but the stakes are in many ways bigger. Westland is a highly profitable part of GKN, making military helicopters, including the Apache and EH101 for the British Army and the Royal Air Force. Together the two companies will have a combined order book of \$8.5 billion (£5.5 billion).

David Turner, GKN's finance director, said the momentum of consolidation in the defence sector was increasing and said that after the Agusta deal, the company could look two ways. "We can participate in the consolidation of the defence industry in Europe or we can look across the Atlantic for partners."

Mr Turner said that there was a case for rationalising manufacturing sites. Westland employs 3,800 people at Yeovil but the Italian company has six or seven sites. The structure of the merger has not been agreed but City analysts expect the British company to get the lion's share as Westland is believed to be more profitable and controls £3.8 billion of the £5.5 billion order book.

Commentary, page 23



DAVID LONGSTREATH/AP

Khmer Rouge 'murdered Pol Pot to prevent tell-all trial'

By JAMES PRINGLE

POL POT, the Cambodian dictator responsible for the deaths of an estimated 1.7 million people, lies dead guarded by a Khmer Rouge soldier in his hut in a camp near the Thai border.

There were immediate suggestions that the man who was never brought to justice for causing one of the most macabre tragedies of the 20th century had been murdered by an aide.

Last night, journalists who crossed the Cambodian border and saw the body, framed with flowers and a straw fan, had no doubt it was "Brother Number One". They added that the body was beginning to decompose and might be cremated today.

But intelligence sources in Bangkok thought Pol Pot's death "too neat", and said that he might have been murdered at the hands of the new Khmer Rouge leader, Ta Mok.

Dr Henry Kissinger, the former US Secretary of State, agreed, saying yesterday that the Khmer Rouge might have killed its former leader to avoid handing him over for a trial, at which he might have revealed his connections with the present Hun Sen regime in Phnom Penh, the Cambodian capital.

Diplomats added that a trial would be embarrassing for too many individuals and countries, including China — the one-time chief backer of Democratic Kampuchea.

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Cut spending says Brown

Gordon Brown gave the Cabinet a thinly-veiled warning last night that it would only achieve its aims of higher spending on health and education if it tightened up on expenditure across the board.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer used a speech to the International Monetary Fund in Washington for his firm message to senior colleagues who are pressing him for extra money. Page 2

Estate offer

Stephen Hinchliffe, the controversial South Yorkshire businessman, has emerged as the backer for a £15 million takeover of the 16,000 acre Knoyd estate in the west of Scotland. The takeover comes despite offers by a consortium of local residents backed by Sir Cameron Macintosh, the theatre producer, and Chris Brasher, the gold medal winning runner. Page 25

£200m aid for Ulster to back up peace deal

By MARTIN FLETCHER AND ANDREW PIERCE

NORTHERN IRELAND is to benefit from a £200 million aid package to strengthen the peace agreement.

Tony Blair also sought to bolster the peace agreement by offering Unionists reassurances about the release of paramilitary prisoners and the future of the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

He insisted that prisoners would be released only if their organisations had "genuinely and properly given up violence". And as Ronnie Flanagan, the RUC Chief Constable, set up a hotline to answer the concerns of his officers, the Prime Minister promised that there was no question of disbanding the force.

Mo Mowlam, the Northern Ireland Secretary, also offered to meet the Orange Order's Grand Lodge, which declined to endorse the agreement on

Wednesday, to discuss their reservations.

The Ulster Young Unionists also rejected the agreement last night, calling it a sop to terrorists, but David Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, remained convinced that the deal would be accepted by both his party and the people. He predicted that it would win more than 70 per cent support.

Mr Trimble attacked the Rev Ian Paisley, the Democratic Unionist Party leader, rejecting his assertion that the agreement would lead inexorably to a united Ireland. Mr Trimble said: "The union is stronger than it's ever been before. This agreement is as good as as fair as it gets."

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Peter Riddell, page 2

Four day break planned for the millennium

By MARK HENDERSON

BRITAIN will celebrate the millennium with a four-day Bank Holiday weekend under plans drawn up by Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary, and expected to be approved by Cabinet this month.

Friday December 31, 1999 will be declared a Bank Holiday under the scheme, and the standard New Year's Day holiday will be taken on Monday January 3, 2000 because January 1 falls on a Saturday.

The special holiday means most Britons will enjoy four days off work to usher in the new millennium in a one-off midwinter long weekend.

With Christmas Day and Boxing Day also falling at the weekend in 1999, there will be just two working

days, setting the stage for a massive national celebration. The extra Bank Holiday will be a unique bonus, and is not expected to replace any of the eight regular Bank Holidays in 1999 or 2000. Even so, Britain's nine days off in 1999 lags far behind other countries. For example, France has 14 regular Bank Holidays, Germany has 17 and Cuba 20.

The holiday is likely to be approved by a Cabinet committee in the next two weeks, and Mr Smith will make a formal announcement in May.

Extra Bank Holidays are very rarely granted by the Government — the millennium holiday will be the first since the Duke and Duchess of York married in 1986 — but consultations on the idea of a millennium holiday have proved it overwhelmingly popular with the public.

The Bank of England, business and community groups and local government have given their blessings to the plans, which Mr Smith first suggested last summer, according to officials close to the discussions.

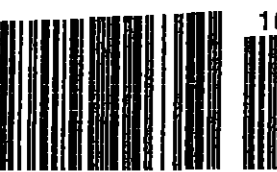
Don Cruickshank, head of the Government's millennium bug task force, is the only important figure to have opposed the holiday. The break could create further problems for businesses that use computer systems affected by the bug, Mr Cruickshank said.

The last millennium was on a Wednesday in the Julian calendar, which was replaced in the 18th century by the modern day Gregorian one. Eithred the Unready was the King of England and beset by Danes. There is no record of a Bank Holiday in that year.



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Tighten your belts, Brown warns his Cabinet colleagues

By Philip Webster, Political Editor

GORDON BROWN delivered a thinly-veiled warning to the Cabinet last night that it would only achieve its aims of higher spending on health and education if it tightened up on expenditure across the board.

The Chancellor used a speech to the International Monetary Fund in Washington to send a firm message to senior colleagues at home who are pressing him for extra money.

The Times disclosed two weeks ago that the Government's year-long comprehensive spending review, designed to produce economies across Whitehall, had ended up with most of them asking for more money.

John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, is understood to have asked for a £3 billion real terms increase in his budget for new investment in public transport and urban regeneration schemes.

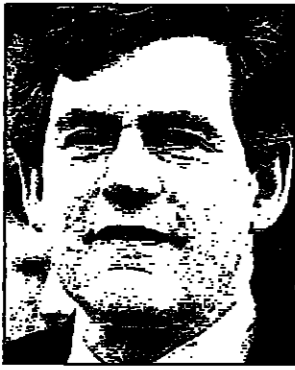
culture of Whitehall which has traditionally judged ministers by their success in squeezing money from the Treasury.

The Chancellor said last night: "It is only if we manage to achieve spending discipline across the board, through the elimination of waste and a rigorous focus on our priorities, that we will be able to ensure investment in our key public services, particularly education and health, and in modernising our economic and social fabric."

"This is a Government that will remain true to a long-term economic strategy, in the national interest — based on the essential virtues of stability and prudence, work and enterprise and fairness — and will not be diverted by short-term pressures."

Mr Brown urged the world to respond to the Asian financial crisis by continuing to pursue open market policies. "Combined with policies designed to promote stable levels of growth and unemployment, open markets will help the world economy adjust to the Asian crisis and deal more effectively with any future shocks," he said.

He called for a more dynamic Japanese economy with further progress on reforms to its financial system.



Brown gave warning in address to IMF

of sustainable growth." He said he understood the concerns among British manufacturers about the damage inflicted on exports by the high value of the pound.

"But what would be an even greater worry would be any risk of a return to the kind of stop-go instability we saw in the late 1980s and early 1990s," he said.

"In achieving sustainable growth in place of the boom-bust instability of the past, everyone should take a long-term view."

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Prince Harry with Scary, Baby and Posh Spice in Johannesburg. He met them again yesterday at Highgrove

Spicy tea for Prince Harry

By Simon de Bruxelles

THE Spice Girls interrupted a sell-out series of concerts yesterday to join the Prince of Wales and Prince Harry for tea in the country.

A small crowd of bedraggled fans gathered outside Prince Charles's Highgrove estate in Gloucestershire to watch the pop group arrive by helicopter. Royal protocol was put aside when Sporty Spice greeted 13-year-old Harry with a hug and a kiss. She was followed off the helicopter by Ginger Spice, Geri Halliwell, who linked arms



Fans in Tetbury saw only the group's helicopter

with Prince Charles for the short walk to the house.

The five members of Britain's most successful girl pop group had been invited to Highgrove as a thank you for their interest and involvement with the Prince's Trust charity. Missing from the occasion

was Prince William, 15, who had returned to Eton the day before.

The Spice Girls' white helicopter flew in above the gaggle of 50 screaming fans who had waited outside the gates in driving rain. The fans had already left their

mark on the village of Tetbury by changing the signpost to say it was twinned with "Spice Girls". Danielle Roberts and Rachel Robertson, both 13, waited for four hours but left disappointed.

Danielle, from Swindon, said: "We thought we would come here to see them but after standing in the cold for hours all we could see was a helicopter." Prince Harry met the girls at the charity concert in Johannesburg and was photographed holding hands with Posh Spice — Victoria Adams — and Baby Spice — Emma Bunton.

Scourge of liberals and moral guardian

By Peter Foster

ANTHONY O'HEAR, philosopher, education adviser, occasional newspaper columnist and scourge of the liberal Left, has never been afraid to air his traditionalist views.

Appointed by the Conservatives in 1990 as an adviser on education, Professor O'Hear regularly accused progressive teachers of "anti-authoritarian and subversive attitudes".

He is Professor of Philosophy at Bradford University, describing himself as a "Burkean monarchist and traditionalist", and has written several pamphlets for right-wing think tanks such as the Centre for Policy Studies and the Social Affairs Unit. Most recently he attacked Labour's pledge for a mass higher education system as an "impossible dream" that would drive down standards.

As a member of the Schools' Curriculum Assessment Authority and the Teacher Training Agency, Professor O'Hear championed good manners and strict discipline, and supported head teachers prepared to expel "ineducable" children for the sake of the majority.

In between, he has had time to attack the "pervasive, romantic myth" that children should be allowed to develop naturally. "A sense of right and wrong... will not appear as if by magic, in the absence of positive moral guidance from teachers," he wrote in the *Daily Mail*.

Ulster deal buoys Blair on visit to Middle East

By Andrew Pierce, Political Correspondent

TONY BLAIR today begins a five-day mission to bolster the Middle East peace process — a week after helping to secure the foundations for a Northern Ireland settlement.

The Prime Minister, buoyed by letters of congratulation from world leaders including President Mubarak of Egypt and King Hussein of Jordan, played down expectations of significant progress.

His official spokesman, who

said that the visit was being conducted as part of Britain's presidency of the EU, said: "We do not expect any major breakthrough, but the Prime Minister does hope we can narrow gaps."

Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, who has privately admitted he mishandled his recent controversial visit to Israel, today sought to repair the diplomatic damage.

In an article in *The Times*, he writes: "Tony Blair and I are friends of Israel, and friends of the peace process."

When the Prime Minister visits the region he will speak openly and frankly, as a friend."

Mr Blair, accompanied by his wife, Cherie, will visit Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan before concluding the trip in Israel. He will raise the subject of Deborah Parry and Lucille McLaughlan, the nurses jailed in Saudi Arabia.

He will meet Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, and visit Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan and Gaza.

Robin Cook, page 15

Attack on Princess's sentimental society

Continued from page 1

that's what gave her her strength in many ways," he said. "She wasn't a very subtle person but she elevated feelings — and that's why she was so popular. She wasn't afraid to express her feelings."

Victor Adebowale, chief executive of the Centrepoint charity for the homeless, of which the Princess was patron, said that it was wrong to think there was anything fake or sentimental about her charitable work. "The young people at Centrepoint were always really touched by her visits and by her genuine feelings for them. They certainly didn't think her concern was fake and we always really valued her interest in our work."

The British Red Cross, whose campaign to ban landmines was supported

by the Princess, denied that her charity work was driven by sentimentality and "emotional correctness". "Diana was echoing what people all around the world, including landmine survivors from places like Bosnia and Cambodia, were saying. Because of the nature of the weapons, it was difficult to avoid confronting the suffering of the victims, which some people might mistake for trying to get sentimental over the issue, but they would be wrong."

Derek Bedell, director of the National Aids Trust, said: "There were a lot of people trying to persuade her to drop her support for AIDS because they did not think it was a seemly cause. She said she wanted to remain as our patron. That does not fit with the description of her as someone who was only interested in herself."

Peter Luff, Conservative MP for Mid-Worcestershire, said: "Freedom of speech is all very well, but you must always measure the impact of your words on those who will hear them. And, although I am sure there will be some who will agree with Professor O'Hear, the overwhelming majority of people will find his remarks distasteful and inappropriate."

Cosima Somerset, one of the Princess's close friends, also thought it too soon for a national discussion of her virtues or negative traits. "I am shocked. It is terrible what he is saying. I knew her for a long time. I do not recognise what his description. It is very hard. It will be very hard for her boys," she said.

Ann Widdecombe, the Tory MP for Maidstone and the Weald, who was

not a noted admirer of the Princess, was also concerned about the impact on her sons when she said: "It is too soon for this sort of debate."

Anthony Holden, the royal biographer, said that the British public would not recognise the Princess from Professor O'Hear's description. But he added: "I think that certain members of the Royal Family would share that trenchant view of Diana. But it has not stopped the continuing Dianafication of the monarchy. In death they have reclaimed her as one of their own despite having rejected her a year earlier. The 'Spice Girls' visiting Highgrove was ample testimony of that."

Earl Spencer, the Princess's brother, read the essay, but declined to comment.



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Adams seeks to avoid party split

By Martin Fletcher, Chief Ireland Correspondent

THE people for whom the Northern Ireland agreement poses the greatest difficulty, according to the senior Ulster Unionist Rep. Emyr, are republicans who had tried for 30 years "to obliterate Northern Ireland".

Senior Sinn Fein officials admit that the essentially partitionist agreement poses real problems for a movement that has spilled so much of its own — and others' — blood in the pursuit of Irish unity.

A *Guardian-Irish Times* poll yesterday suggested 80 per cent of Sinn Fein supporters backed the agreement. But party officials refused to predict whether the movement would accept the deal, reject it or abstain — or whether a two-thirds conference majority could be obtained to change Sinn Fein's constitution so its

representatives could sit in the Northern Ireland assembly.

So far, Sinn Fein leaders have offered no public judgment on the agreement. Officials insist any attempt to impose it on the movement could result in a catastrophic split. The party will thrash out the complex issues at its conference in Dublin this weekend, but will delay a final decision to permit wider consultation.

Mr Adams is urging republicans to judge the agreement purely by whether it advances the struggle for Irish unity. At first sight it spectacularly fails that test.

The agreement would end Dublin's constitutional claim to the North; acknowledge Northern Ireland's legitimacy; and bar any change in the Province's constitutional status without consent.

Polls show support, but it's early days

THE latest poll shows such overwhelming support for the Northern Ireland peace agreement that there is no reason to doubt that a majority of people are currently in favour in the Province, as well as in mainland Britain and the Irish Republic.

The polls for *The Guardian* and *The Irish Times* were conducted between April 11 and 14 by Harris Research, ICM and MRBI. They showed proportions in favour rising from 61 per cent in the Irish Republic (with 20 per cent against), via 73 per cent in Northern Ireland (14 per cent against) to 81 per cent (4 per cent against) in Britain.

Although the main London based organisations seldom undertake polls in Northern Ireland where the party system is different, there is long experience of undertaking polls in the special conditions there.

The margins are so big as to be clear cut at this stage, even if some allowance is made for a possible reluctance by some people to say to an interviewer that they oppose the deal.

However, two caveats are necessary. First, the polls were undertaken in the immediate aftermath of the favourable publicity for the Good Friday agreement, which may have boosted the numbers in favour. Secondly, voting in the referendums north and south of the border is still five weeks away, so the current polls are like those at the beginning of a general election campaign. A lot can change in the intervening period, especially in the highly-charged atmosphere of Northern Ireland politics.

The main doubt is over the question asked in Northern Ireland about voting intentions in the elections for the assembly. Both Sinn Fein and the Democratic Unionist Party are now put on half the level of support they won in last May's general election. This could be because some respondents were reluctant publicly to say they back parties which are often depicted as extremist, even if they will do so privately when they come to vote.

PETER RIDDELL

NEWS IN BRIEF

Blunkett takes action to pacify teachers

David Blunkett acted to defuse teachers' anger yesterday by cutting paperwork and getting tough with problem pupils and their parents. The Education Secretary called emergency talks to avert industrial action over red tape. Mr Blunkett also promised to get "as tough as nails" with parents who failed to play their part in ensuring their children behaved at school.

The news was cheered by the annual conference of the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers. Mr Blunkett promised that the talks next week would produce guidelines to be sent to every school on reducing bureaucracy. Speaking at the conference, he said: "We have to avoid industrial action because any form of industrial action is going to be damaging." He was jeered by teachers who next term will refuse to attend more than one after-school lesson a week, or write any report of longer than 400 words, as part of their protest.

Foot fractures shoulder

Michael Foot, the former leader of the Labour Party, is recovering in the Royal Free Hospital, near his home in Hampstead, northwest London, after fracturing his left shoulder in a fall three days ago. "He has had a lot of pain," his wife, Jill Craigie, said yesterday. "He will be in hospital until Sunday and then he will be inactive for at least eight weeks. But it will not matter too much, all he wants to do is read." Mr Foot was to have spoken at a rally in support of striking library employees on Wednesday.

Curfew to be extended

Britain's first curfew on children is to be extended for a further six months, it was announced yesterday. John Orr, Chief Constable of Strathclyde police, said that the pilot scheme that covers three housing estates in the Lanarkshire town of Hamilton has reduced teenage crime and was being extended to other areas. Children under 16 Spm. If the reduction in crime continues until September, the scheme will be expanded to the entire town.

Principal drops action

The former Principal of St Chad's College, Durham, who left after alleged discrepancies were disclosed in his academic qualifications, has abandoned his claim for compensation. The Rev Duane Waide-Hampton Arnold left his £40,000-a-year post in January 1997, claiming he was the victim of a whispering campaign. Dr Arnold has now decided to drop his case for unfair dismissal and, in return, the university will give up any counter claims. A statement said both parties "wish to draw a line under the matter".

Aches that go to the head

Children who often complain about stomach aches are likely to have psychiatric problems when they grow up, according to research published today in the *British Medical Journal*. Among a representative group of 3,637 children born in 1946, the researchers found the 73 by the time they were 36, far more likely to suffer psychiatric disorders — although they no longer complained of stomach pains.

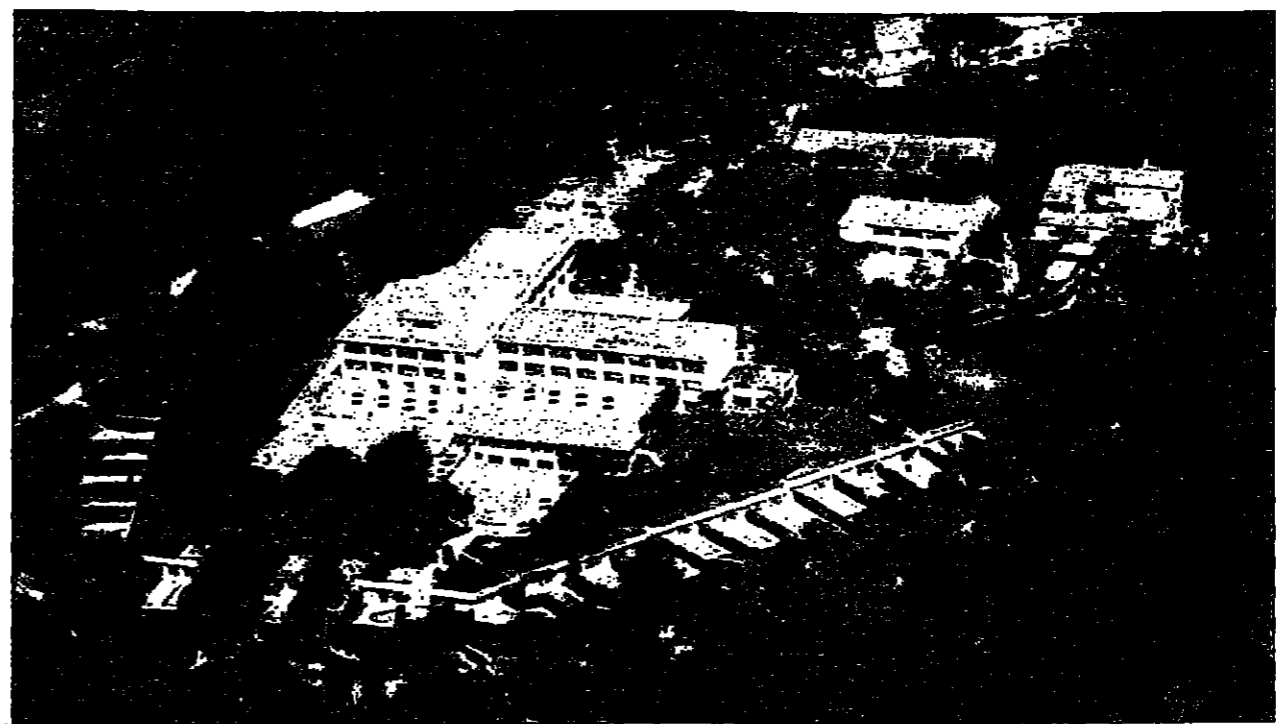
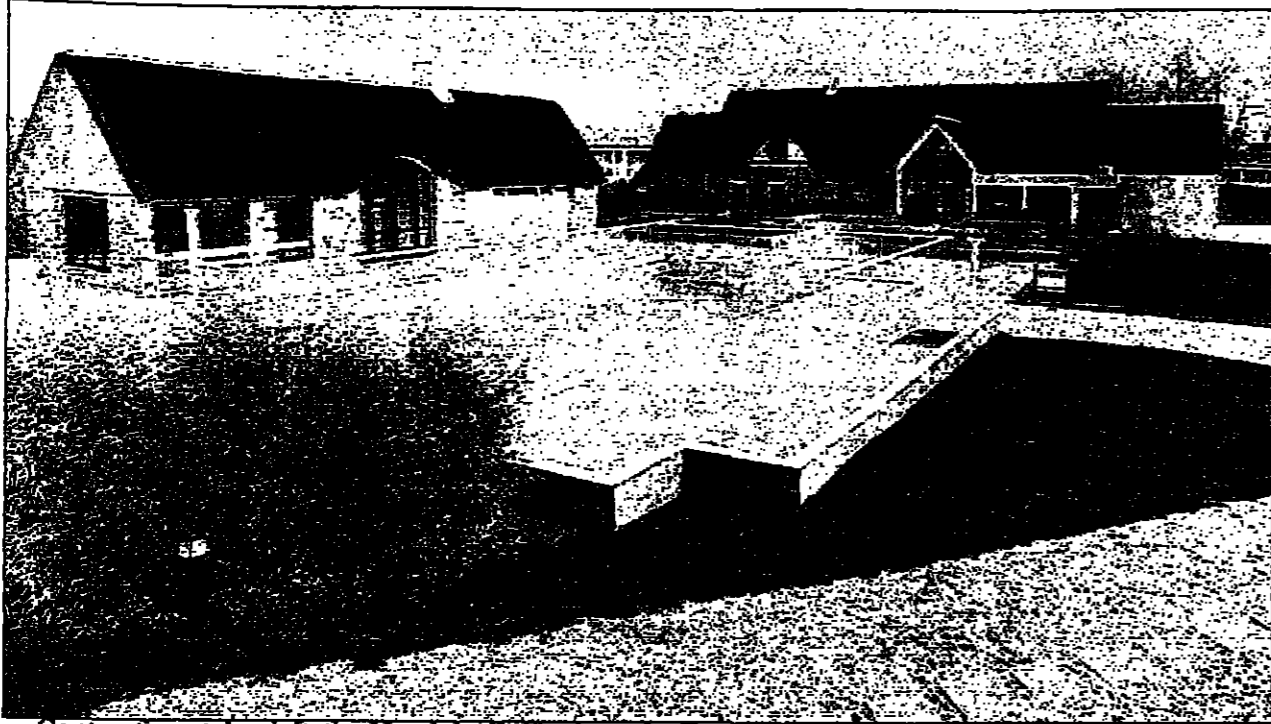
England



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Vertical text on the right edge of the page, including "Jailbreakers for a run..."

England full of beans for World Cup



Contrasting styles: left, the Hotel du Golf, where the England squad will be staying. Right, the Mas d'Artigny hotel complex, where the Germans are booked until they move to Versailles for the final stages

THEY are stocking up on baked beans, kettles have been provided for tea drinkers, and the computer games have been ordered. After all, no detail should be overlooked for the World Cup headquarters of the England squad.

But like English tourists who find that German holidaymakers have already put their towels on the sunbeds, there was a feeling last night that it is the German team who have really scored with their World Cup base in France.

While England has opted for La Baule's modern Hotel du Golf with a communal pool on Brittany's Atlantic coast, their rivals will be at the Mas d'Artigny hotel complex on the

Riviera, near Saint Paul de Venise between Nice and Cannes. It has 25 private swimming pools.

Not only that, the Germans are so confident of reaching the semi-finals, they have already booked the palatial five-star Hotel Trianon in Versailles for the last rounds of the championship this summer.

It is not the first time that the England team has stayed in the Brittany resort, which has long been a favourite of British holidaymakers. "The English players chose this hotel themselves because they felt so at home here last year,"

said their hotel's director, Yannick Patureau.

The suites could be described as comfortable, rather than luxurious, although they do boast stunning views over the adjoining golf course for the squad's keen golfers. The suites are arranged in a row of bungalow-style around terraced gardens and a central swimming pool. The sitting rooms, with individual terraces, are simply furnished with wicker furniture and a large sofa. A second television in the bedroom and an American-style open-plan kitchen equipped with a washing machine and microwave add to a homely atmosphere.

Kettles have been provided for English tea drinkers, but should the team be tempted to celebrate with something stronger, they will be disappointed. On the orders of the coach Glenn Hoddle, each minibar will be stripped of its alcoholic contents before their arrival. Women are also off limits, so should David Beckham wish to spend any time with his fiancée, Victoria Adams (Push Spice), she will have to find alternative accommodation.

Mr Hoddle, a Christian, will be pleased to find that a copy of the New Testament is provided with every room. He may not be so thrilled to discover that his players can watch pornographic films on the French cable channel, Canal+.

To ensure the team's privacy, a 3-metre wicker fence will be erected around the complex while 30 anti-terrorist police officers will provide round-the-clock surveillance and local police patrol the perimeter with dogs. The fact that the local shooting club is next door to the sports centre,

which will serve as the England squad training ground, will undoubtedly provide an additional headache for security officers.

The sports centre will be closed to the local gymnastics and basketball teams while the England team go through their paces. Mr Hoddle's arrival is eagerly awaited in La Baule, where it is widely rumoured that he will bring presents from England for local children to compensate them for their lost facilities.

The four-star hotel has a distinctly unusual design. It is the work of four architects from Poland, America, France and Finland, which perhaps explains the bizarre mélange of warring styles with steeply pitched roofs perched atop neo-classical columns flanked by vast expanses of plate glass.

As well as the baked beans, the French hosts are doubling the restaurant space, converting the underground car park into a carpeted games room — at the players' request

— installing video games and a giant television console.

In contrast, at the Mas d'Artigny, Jean-Claude Suchet, the assistant director, said he had received no special requests from the German team. Set in 9 hectares of gardens, the hotel already offers a practice golf range, tennis, the 25 private swimming pools, bowls and cycling. The fashionable retreat of Saint-Paul-de-Vence is where Rolling Stone Bill Wyman married Suzanne

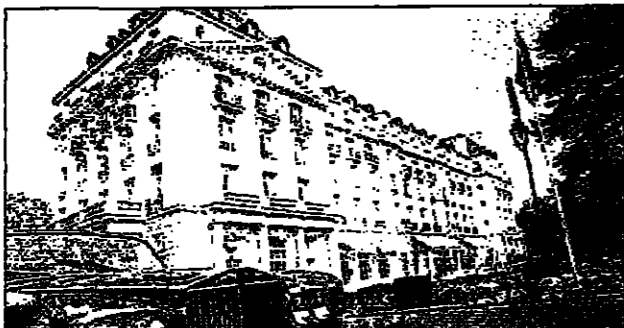
Accosta, and each of the German's rooms opens on to a private balcony with panoramic views of the Mediterranean.

A restaurant with yet more panoramic views offers regional specialties with a Provencal flavour. However, M Suchet did not think the Germans would be sampling his fare. "They are here to win, not to have a holiday," he said.

The Brazilians have chosen to relax between their matches at the luxurious 13th century

Château de la Grande Ro-maine, just outside Paris. The Germans plan to move towards the capital in the final rounds. The palatial Hotel Trianon is equally impressive. Set behind massive wrought iron gates, with manicured gardens, a sunlit indoor heated swimming pool, sauna and state-of-the-art gym, it is comparable to the Ritz in terms of luxury and comfort. The hotel boasts a two-star Michelin restaurant run by top French chef, Gérard Vité. The rooms here are roughly three times as large as those reserved for the England squad.

But the Germans seem to have booked rather more luxurious accommodation, Susan Bell reports



R 1966 OVERSIGHT

BY THE TIMES DIARY

IN THE latest affront to the England football team, the French have obliterated any record of our 1966 World Cup triumph from the official government guide to this summer's tournament.

Label France, an information magazine published by the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs, records the wins of every competing country — except England's victory over Germany. Brazil's 15 appearances and four titles are mentioned, as are the three wins for Germany and Italy and the two for Argentina. But the reference to England simply states: "England: nine appearances."

The French, keen to maintain the *entente cordiale*, insist the omission is a simple mistake. Our Football Association accepts

this, calling it an "oversight", but it comes a couple of days after a French government minister said British fans could travel to the country during the tournament even if they did not have tickets for the games.

Geoff Hurst, who scored a hat-trick in the 1966 final, was understanding about the latest mix-up, assuming it to be "a simple administrative error", while Sir Bobby Charlton blamed cock-up, not conspiracy: "Everyone says that the French hate us, but it sounds like a harmless mistake." But Tony Banks, the Sports Minister, was less sanguine: "They either don't know the history of the World Cup, or someone has made one grande boo-boo."

A spokeswoman for the French ministry said: "It is an error. It will be corrected in the next issue without excuse. It was nothing personal, I assure you."

Jailbreaker is heading for a runaway success

BY ALAN HAMILTON

IF THE escaped convict John Patrick Hannan should read this, he might like to know that he is only three years away from a world record.

Hannan was yesterday declared Britain's most successful missing prisoner, having been on the run for 42 years, 3 months and 25 days. If he can keep his cover until the millennium, he will have a chance of regaining the blue riband from Leonard Frisco, an American who was at liberty for 45 years and 11 months until turned in by his son.

Hannan was sentenced to 21 months at the Old Bailey in 1955 for car theft and assault on two police officers. A mere 30 days into his sentence, and aged only 22, he escaped from Verne prison in Dorset with a fellow inmate, Gwynn Thomas. He has never been seen since.

Thomas was less fortunate. He was arrested within 24 hours, near Dorchester, after

the escapees were spotted by an alert lorry driver. But despite a massive police hunt involving tracker dogs and roadblocks, Hannan gave them the slip and has continued to do so ever since.

By doing so, he has left Ronnie Biggs and Lord Lucan as third-division also-rans in the league table of elusiveness. Dorset Police said yesterday that they were still anxious to talk to Hannan, but more out of curiosity, and possibly a sneaking admiration, than any urgent desire to bang him back behind bars.

At the time of his escape, police issued a description of him: Irish, 5ft 7in tall, with brown hair, blue eyes and proportionate build. "He might have changed slightly since then," police admitted yesterday.

Hannan's abscondment at the time was no great shakes, and by no means in the same league as, for example, Steve

McQueen or George Blake. Verne at that time was almost an open prison, and all Hannan would have needed to do was to walk far enough away from a prison officer, and then leg it.

Dorset Police admitted last night that they were no longer actively searching for a blue-eyed Irishman who, if still alive, would now be 64 years old and may well have dyed his hair, grown a beard, or shrunk with age below his height at the prime of life. "But we would still love to find him even after all these years: there is a small matter of some unfinished business," a police spokesman said. "We would love to hear from him, even if he just drops us a line to let us know he is still around."

Go on, John: send the boys in blue a postcard, with a clue to prove it's really you. You don't have to give them your address, because they're not going to send you a medal.

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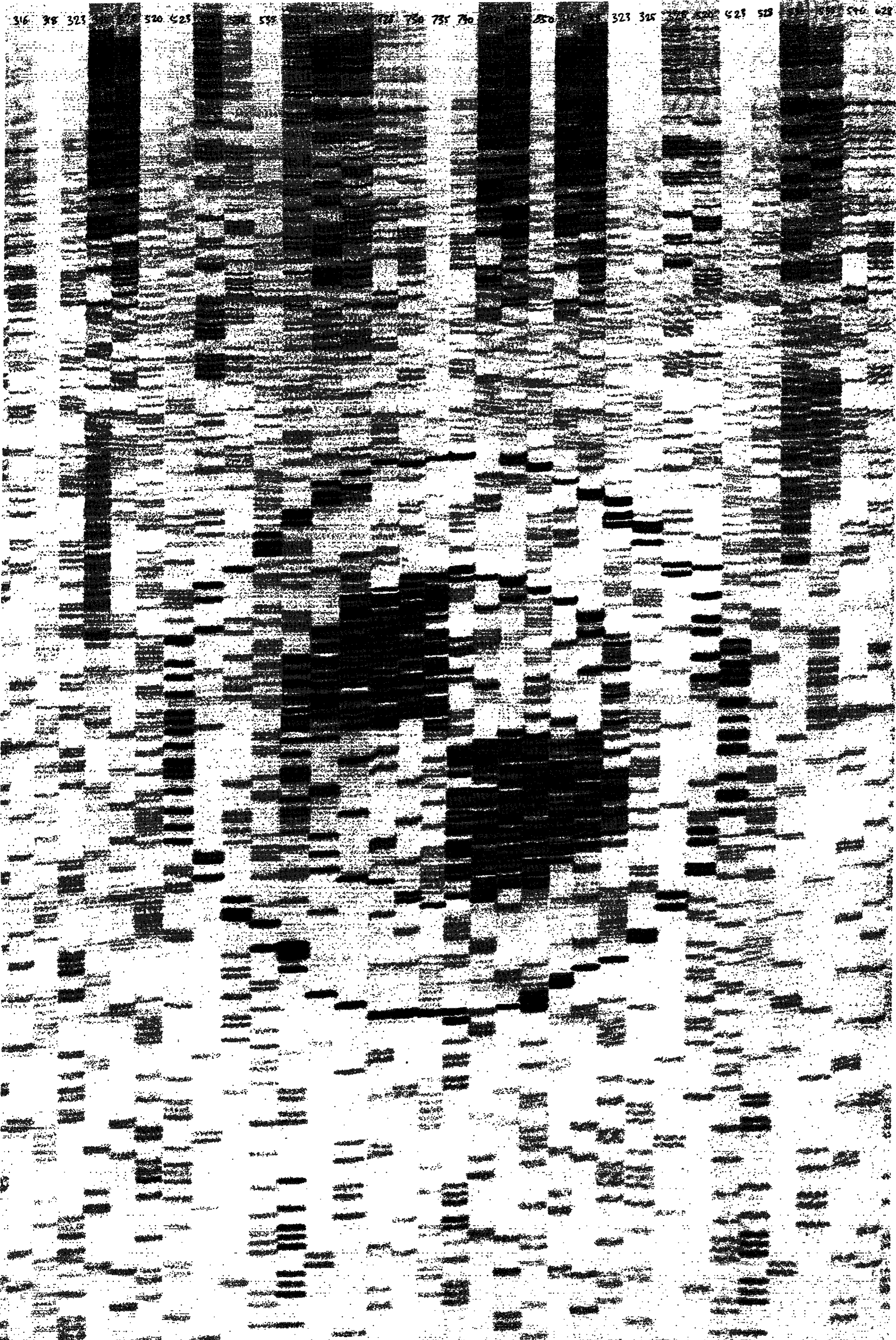
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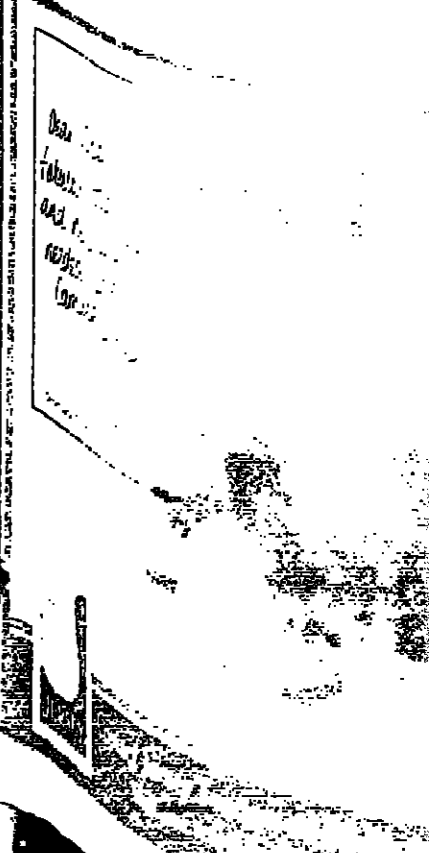
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Irvine's... forced out... blame for...

BBC plans night sports bulletin

Coppers marks...

BRITAIN'S... The... as... in... may... best... the...



Irvine's PR chief forced out after blame for bad press

By Frances Gibb and Valerie Elliott

THE head of information at the Lord Chancellor's Department has been forced to leave her post after being blamed for a stream of bad publicity about Lord Irvine of Lairg, the Lord Chancellor.

Sheila Thompson, 47, who has been a key adviser at the department for eight years, is to leave her job on May 1. She has been offered a compensation package under Civil Service terms after deciding against legal action.

Her departure was effectively forced upon her after the Lord Chancellor decided to hire a higher-grade civil servant to take on a new post of director of communications over her head. The new job has been filled by Allan Percival, currently deputy press secretary in the Prime Minister's Office.

Despite Miss Thompson's excellent track record of dealing with the press and good reputation within Whitehall, friends say Lord Irvine unfairly held her to blame for the bad publicity over recent months.

This started with his joking comparison to the all-powerful Cardinal Wolsey and was followed by a critical national newspaper profile. It culminated in the continuing furore over the £650,000 refurbishment of his official apartment.

December when in a lengthy grilling the Lord Chancellor told Miss Thompson that he was not receiving the service he expected of her. He wished her to take more action to stop adverse stories and headlines — even though much of the poor publicity had nothing to do with her responsibilities at the department.

He also criticised her lack of promotion of measures such as the Human Rights Bill, although that is a Home Office measure. One official said: "The problem has been that Lord Irvine did not understand what a civil servant could or could not do."

The difficulties are partly due to the Lord Chancellor's wider role in overseeing major constitutional change. Most Cabinet ministers employ special advisers to act as political press officers to put a "spin" on an issue. But it was only a month ago that Garry Hart, a City solicitor, was appointed to work as Lord Irvine's special adviser.

At the same time, Miss Thompson found herself hamstrung in seeking to promote departmental policy initiatives such as legal aid and civil justice reform, because press interest focused on such issues as Lord Irvine's choice of wallpaper.

She was informed before Christmas that a director of

communications was to be trawled for within Whitehall. But a senior official in the department told Miss Thompson that if she applied for the new post or as deputy to it she would not be given the job.

Miss Thompson refused yesterday to elaborate on the reasons for her departure. Officials told her she had lost the Lord Chancellor's confidence. But she told a friend: "I don't believe I ever had his confidence, although I did the job to the best of my professional ability."

A friend added yesterday: "She has behaved perfectly professionally but has had an impossible job. The Lord Chancellor expected her to behave in a way which was really beyond a civil servant's remit and to act more like a political adviser. But there is no way a civil servant can comment on personal or political stories."

Recently relations have been strained. Miss Thompson rarely sees the Lord Chancellor and communicates with him by paper. He has not acknowledged her departure to her face.

At the same time as she leaves the Lord Chancellor's Department she will also leave the Government Information Service. She is now considering opportunities with a public relations firm.



Sheila Thompson yesterday after confirming that she is leaving her job on May 1

Cats charity boss got her claws into executive

By Kathryn Knight

A SENIOR executive at the Cats Protection League was yesterday awarded £15,000 for unfair dismissal after claiming that her boss had subjected her to a campaign of humiliation and harassment.

Alison Swann, 44, said she was forced to resign as editor of the charity's in-house magazine, *The Cat*, after suffering a nervous breakdown following endless criticism by the chairwoman, Linda Reeves.

Mrs Swann was awarded the out-of-court settlement after an industrial tribunal at Croydon, South London, was told of the power struggles and disputes at the 70-year-old organisation, which rescues 80,000 animals a year.

She described her anguish at being forced out of the charity, where she had taken over the magazine editor's chair from her father, Group Captain Harry Boothby, who had turned the once small charity into a thriving concern after joining as assistant director in 1977.

In documents, the tribunal was told that Group Captain Boothby had resigned as a board trustee member in 1997 along with two other board members after a series of arguments with Ms Reeves. Mrs Swann, from Bognor

Regis, West Sussex, said in a statement: "From that moment, my employers deliberately sought to undermine my position as head of department and to downgrade my position within the CPL."

She said that after the resignations she had found herself on Ms Reeves's "hit list" for her work on the magazine, which goes out to all 5,000 members of the charity and gives the latest news on cat rescues and general welfare. She had found that her work had been endlessly criticised and her home-to-work petrol allowance and then her car, had been withdrawn.

On November 23, 1997, she had prepared a letter of resignation and put in a discreet farewell editorial message in the next edition of *The Cat*. The single paragraph had been replaced with a picture of a cat.

"I had been performing perfectly well right up to this date, but felt unable to take any more harassment and victimisation from the CPL trustees," Mrs Swann said. "I was in a state of severe grief and shock at what had been done to me."

The league declined to comment last night.

BBC plans nightly sports bulletins

By Carol Midgley, Media Correspondent

THE BBC is hoping to boost its ratings by running ten-minute sports bulletins every night, probably at the end of an extended *Nine O'Clock News*. The round-up will incorporate highlights, previews and analysis of the day's sporting news and events.

BBC executives believe the move will help the BBC to regain some of the ground it has lost in its sports coverage, especially to Sky Sports channels. The change could start in the autumn with the football season, although some are arguing for it to be introduced in June to strengthen coverage of the World Cup.

Bob Shennan, the BBC's new head of sport, said that he incorporated the sports news coverage was "sporadic" and needed a regular fixture in the schedule. "The demand for sports news has really sharpened up in recent years and is an obvious area for us to expand because we have an existing infrastructure."

He is in discussion with the controllers of BBC1 and BBC2 about when the bulletin

should be broadcast. The idea features in a review of overall TV news output.

Possibilities also include a later BBC1 bulletin after the *Nine O'Clock News*, which would incorporate a sports round-up. Another is that *Newsnight* could be extended.

Sky runs an extended version called Sports Centre on its dedicated sports channels, and the BBC's News 24 station has regularly short bulletins, but a 10-minute spot on terrestrial TV will reach millions more viewers.

Sky has exclusive rights to the Premiership football, England's away test matches, some rugby union internationals, Ryder Cup Golf and most top boxing. ITV has Formula One motor racing and shares the FA Cup Final with the BBC. It has also had the European Champions League, Chelsea's run in the Cup Winners Cup is on Channel Five. The BBC has the Euefa Cup, Grand National, Olympics, home Test Matches and the Open and Masters golf championships.

Alleged sex abuse victim grew up to be priest

By A Correspondent

A PRIEST told a jury yesterday that he had been systematically abused by the priest who ran the orphanage where he grew up.

Father Eric Taylor, 78, denies sexually abusing 17 boys at Father Hudson's Orphanage in Coleshill, Warwickshire, from 1957 to 1965.

On the second day of the trial at Warwick Crown Court, the younger priest said that when he was 11 Father Taylor abused him as they sat in his van in a lay-by. "Someone I had wanted to respect and trust betrayed that," he said.

Another alleged victim said that he was abused while ill in bed with dysentery. The man, 52, said that he had run away from the home three times.

One man victim said that he had hit the priest with a hairbrush to stop himself being fondled in his dormitory bed. He said the abuse had left him unable to show affection towards his sons.

The trial continues.

Coppers' marks stop squealing

By Stewart Tendler, Crime Correspondent

BRITAIN'S grasses are going to become legit. A national conference of senior detectives yesterday decided that police informers should be given a new name to raise their status and self-esteem.

The snitch, grass, snout or squealer could soon be known as an agent, source or intelligence asset. Chief constables and senior detectives may even consult a psychologist to see which name would best encourage the informer to work harder. The idea is the latest development in

bringing a policeman's best friend in from the cold. Forces now have a national wage scale for their informants, who include 500 juveniles. Later this year all informants will be put on a database.

Roy Penrose, the head of the new National Crime Squad and chairman of the conference, said there could be benefits in persuading the thousands of informants that they are part of a crime-fighting team. They should not feel they are "a sort of low life", he said. Most informers are criminals but they could still be treated properly.

The new name will be the

latest addition to an argot that can be traced back to Shakespearean times. In those days to inform on somebody was to "peach". By the 17th century, informants were "squeakers" and the Americans introduced "squealer" because informants blabbed like pigs. In the days of Al Capone the informant became a "stoolie" or a "stool pigeon".

"Copper's mark" is said to come from the gypsy word for a nose — *nak*. "Grass" may come from a 1930s hit *Whispering Grass*. Somehow "source" does not have quite the same ring.

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Motorway lighting plans abandoned after road reviews

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

PLANS to add lighting to 250 miles of busy motorways have been suspended indefinitely. Highway Agency officials blame uncertainty over the Government's roadbuilding programme. The decision will leave long stretches of the M1, M6, M4, M2 and M62 unlit. Under its Road User's Charter, the agency pledged to add lighting to an additional 300 miles of motorway and 50 junctions by 2003, but has abandoned the scheme after lighting only 50 miles in five years. Road safety campaigners criticised the decision yesterday, claiming that lighting can halve the number of accidents and that the expense would be offset within three years by reducing the costs resulting from accidents. The average cost of a road traffic injury is £61,330 and the cost of a fatality £991,000. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents called on agency

officials to overturn their decision and to expand lighting beyond the 33 per cent of the motorway network that is already lit. The agency's plans for the new financial year state: "Our programme of providing road lighting was linked to plans for road-widening schemes. Due to both past and ongoing reviews of the road-building programme, this target is currently suspended." Officials say that a string of government road reviews, including one currently examining more than 100 proposed schemes, has taken motorway widening schemes out of the programme: lighting would have been improved at the same time. Labour ministers have made clear that widening of motorways is unlikely, other than in exceptional circumstances. Highway Agency officials acknowledge that lighting can reduce the number of

accidents by a third but believe that extra lighting is not cost-effective in the short term. "Widening motorways increases the amount of traffic, but without that we do not expect the same rises so we are reviewing the issue of lighting," a spokesman said. Among the busiest stretches where lighting plans have been shelved are: the M1 from north of Nottingham to Rotham; the M62 between Leeds and Pontefract; the M2 from the M25 to Chatham in Kent; the M6 between Cannock and Newcastle-under-Lyme; and the M4 east of the junction with the M5. Research in America and Japan suggests that between 40 per cent and 60 per cent of accidents can be avoided by adding lighting. Government figures for last year show that one in four of all motorway accidents happens after dark on lit stretches and one in three on unlit stretches.



Newly listed: a statue of a blind beggar and dog on Roman Road in Tower Hamlets, East London

Art that lifts shopping centres wins protection

POSTWAR public sculptures, long battered by the twin assaults of critics and vandals, found a new champion yesterday as they were given listed status. Tony Banks, the Sports Minister at the Department of Culture, unveiled a list of 20 pieces of modern artistry that he considers deserve State recognition after years spent grazing shopping centres and housing estates. Among the works that will now benefit from Grade II or Grade II* listing are a 1949 statue in central Coventry of Lady Godiva by William Reid Dick, and the Heaton Park reservoir pumping station in Bury, Greater Manchester, by Milti Cunniffe. Completed in 1955, it has been listed as a "total work of art". It has a beige marble interior, built-in electric fires and external mural and internal wood panels depicting the journey made by Manchester's water. Mr Banks said: "Public monuments and sculptures enrich people's experience of their local surroundings. The works I am listing... are all wonderful examples of art at its most democratic and accessible." Listed status for the sculp-

- ### WORKS TO BE LISTED
- The complete list is as follows:
- Grade II star:
 - Menorah Memorial, Trinity Square, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, Edward Meade and Charles Wheeler, 1892-95.
 - British Medical Association Memorial, Tavistock Square, London Borough of Camden, James Woodford, 1954.
 - Blind Beggar and his Dog, Roman Road, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, Elizabeth Peck, 1952.
 - The Bull, Canbury Avenue, Alton Estate, London Borough of Wandsworth, Robert Cutforth, 1961.
 - Grade II:
 - Southwood Memorial, St James's Churchyard, Fosseville, City of Westminster, A H Greenwell and Alfred F Hartwell, 1947-48.
 - St Andrew's Memorial, Northampton, Park Dalton, 1961.
 - Woman with a Fish, Deane Gardens, Northampton, Park Dalton, 1961.
 - Monolith (Etruscan), Tomwood, Hampstead Lane, London Borough of Camden, Barbara Hepworth, 1955.
 - Shropshire Memorial, Market Square, Harlow, Essex, Ralph Brown, 1955.
 - Pathway to Peace, Chiswick, London Borough of Uxbridge, Henry Moore, 1950-57.
 - Johns, Town Square, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, Frank Brangwyn, 1955-59.
 - The House, Highbury Quadrant, Essex, London Borough of Haringey, Kenneth Martin, 1957-58.
 - St George, Kinross School, Albyn Park, London Borough of Southwark, William Turnbull, 1955.
 - Head Porters, Market Square, Harlow, Essex, Ralph Brown, 1955-60.
 - The Weavers, Albert Estate, London Borough of Wandsworth, Lynn Chadwick, 1951.
 - Two-piece Reclining Figure No 3, Cook's Road, Brandon Estate, London Borough of Spelthorpe, Henry Moore, 1955-59.
 - Epitaph, 143, St West, Penwith, Cornwall, Barbara Hepworth, 1951.
 - Statue, Lambeth College, Roper Hill, London Borough of Lambeth, Kenneth Martin, 1955.
 - Standing Man, William Penn School, Red Post Hill, London Borough of Southwark, Cilla Bebb, 1958.
 - Daugh, Finchdale Road, Abbey Road, London Borough of Greenwich, A H Greenwell, 1952.
 - Corin King and the Spring Queen, Southwark, London Borough of Lambeth, 1954.
 - Upgraded from Grade II to Grade II star:
 - Memorial Figure, Gaslington Hall, Tavistock, Devon, Henry Moore, 1946.

tures, memorials and reliefs means their preservation will have to be considered as part of any plans to alter their surroundings. The works were put forward to Mr Banks after a wide-ranging consultation by English Heritage. His was the final decision. A spokesman for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport said: "We are now at a sufficient distance from the postwar period to be able to judge the artistic merit of these works." The other newly-listed art works include the memorial to President Kennedy at Runnymede, Surrey; two sculptures designed by Barbara Hepworth for the 1951 Festival of Britain Exhibition, and work by Henry Moore.

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17 cancer cases are found after flawed screening

SEVENTEEN women are being treated for cancer after a recall of 1,000 patients whose breast screening was flawed. One thousand women were asked to return for a second mammogram by the Humber-side Breast Screening Service in January after checks revealed that their X-rays were not as clear as they should have been. Hospital officials said that of the 17 women found to have cancer, it may have been possible to detect the disease in six of the original mammograms. The other 11 have developed cancer since the first screening and their initial X-rays showed no signs of abnormality. Ian Galloway, medical director at Royal Hull Hospitals NHS Trust, which manages the breast screening service, said: "We apologise for the distress these women have experienced and assure all of them that we have acted swiftly to ensure they receive the best possible treatment." About 16,000 mammograms taken between April 1995 and March 1996 were re-examined when routine checks showed that some did not meet quality control standards. The second examinations led to the recall of 1,000 women. Mr Galloway said none of the six women whose cancer could have been detected earlier had noticed symptoms of the disease before the re-screening. "Screening is very effective for the vast majority of women and, although it is not 100 per cent accurate, it remains the best way of improving the

PAY APPEAL TO NHS MANAGERS

Health service managers have been told by Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, not to accept pay rises this year above the level awarded to nurses and ancillary staff. They ought to recognise that you have got to set an example from the top," Mr Dobson said yesterday after a survey showed that top health service managers were paid increases averaging 5.2 per cent last year, almost double the rise awarded to nurses. Nurses were awarded 3.8 per cent this year, but because the Government staged the increase, it is worth only 2.6 per cent over the financial year. "I expect managers to comply with what I have asked," Mr Dobson said. Their basic salaries range from £41,000 to £116,000.

outlook in breast cancer," he said. "I want to thank all the 1,000 women who were involved in the re-screen and apologise for any anxiety we may have caused them." A small number of women are expected to develop cancer during the standard three-year interval between screenings. Mr Galloway said that even with the 11 extra cases, the Humber-side service fell within accepted limits for cancers developing during that interval.

Gangster has to miss book signing

By RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

THE Prison Service has stopped Ronnie Knight, former husband of the actress Barbara Windsor, from leaving jail tomorrow after discovering he was to sign copies of his book in a London store. Prison staff acted after Knight, serving seven years for handling £300,000 of the proceeds of a £7 million robbery, prepared to travel "up west" from his cell at Send open prison in Surrey. He was to have been at Dillons book shop in Oxford Street signing copies of his latest book, in which he admits that he was involved in a murder for which he was acquitted. Senior officials in the Prison Service were astonished to



Knight: broke rules by giving interview

discover his plan, which was disclosed in a newspaper interview. They were concerned at possible protests from the public that a man serving a jail term should be allowed to take part in a public relations exercise. Knight, 64, was told that he had broken prison rules by giving the newspaper interview and that his leave had been suspended. Prison staff will consider whether further disciplinary action should be taken. That could mean a loss of privileges or a return to closed conditions. As a Category D offender being held in an open jail and coming towards the end of his sentence, Knight is on the prison's enhanced regime and is allowed four community visits a month, enabling him to travel to London. In his interview in the London Evening Standard he said: "I love going to the shops, and walking round, passing women smelling their smells. I have got used to all that." Earlier this year Knight was pictured in the press walking in Leicester Square before going to see the film Titanic. Neither the publishers of *Memoirs and Confessions* nor Dillons was available for comment last night.

Scientific... see light... search... green... Freedom at last... Weatherfield... Investment Rates... C&G Channel Islands Limited

سكننا من الاصل

Scientists see light in search for green fuel

By Nigel Hawkes, Science Editor

A SOLAR cell which can split water into hydrogen and oxygen has been developed by two American researchers. It is being seen as a milestone in the generation of alternative fuels by environmentally benign methods.

Using only the power of light, the cell breaks up the water, creating hydrogen which could be used as a substitute for oil-based fuels in everything from cars to power stations.

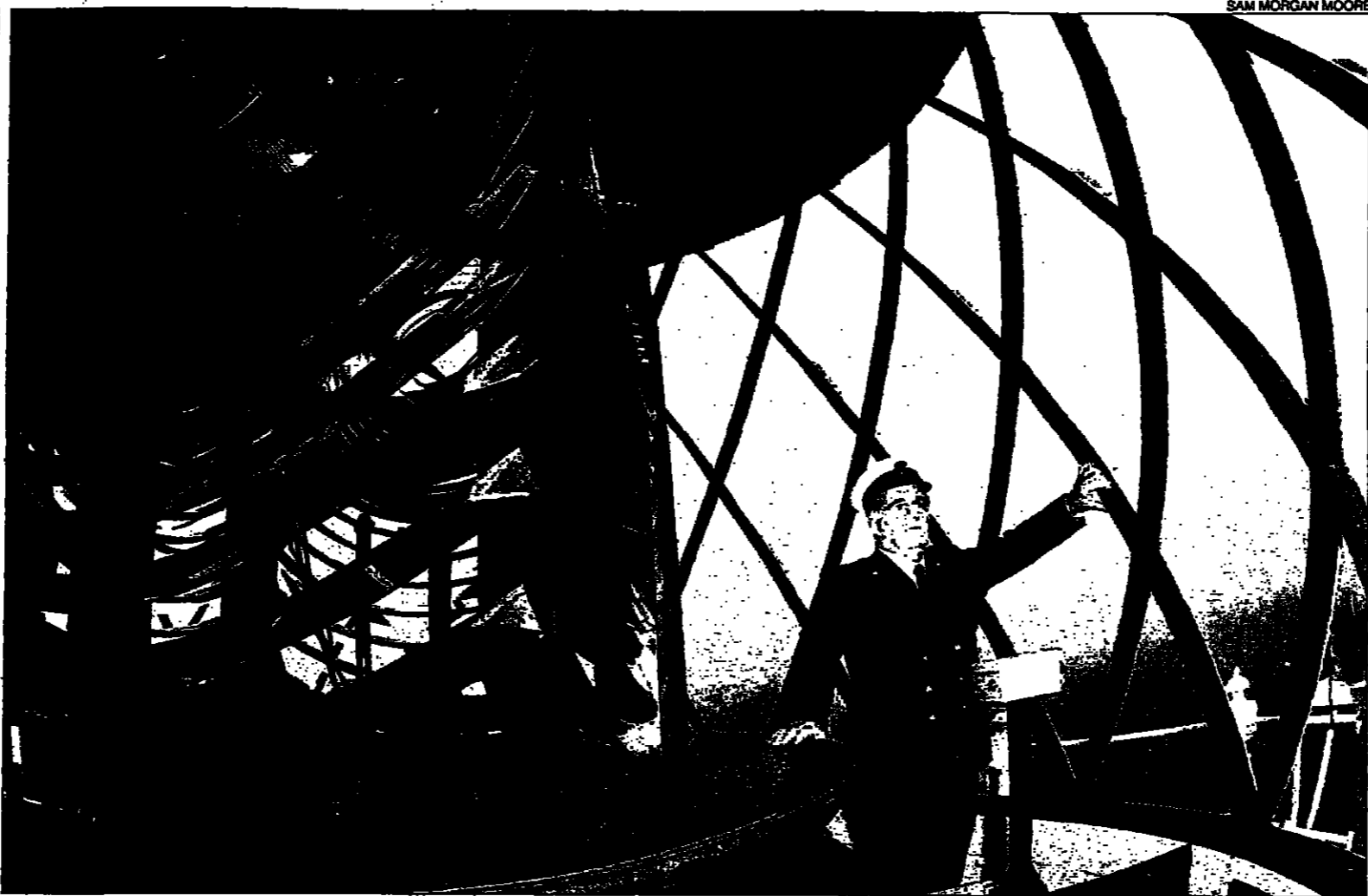
The cell converts 12.5 per cent of the light falling on it into fuel, twice as much as earlier devices have done. The hydrogen it produces is still three times as expensive as that produced from natural gas, but does not depend on limited gas reserves and there is room for further improvement.

The device, which has been produced by the chemists John Turner and Oscar Khaselev at the US National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Golden, Colorado, uses a simple process. Solar cells generate electricity, and electricity can be used to split water into its components, hydrogen and oxygen. But using such a two-stage process is inefficient.

What Drs Turner and Khaselev have done is to combine the two in a cell which can be immersed in water and carry out the process in a single device. In Science, they report that they achieved this using a sandwich-like cell made of two different semiconductors — gallium indium phosphide and gallium arsenide. They used two semiconductors because water will release oxygen and hydrogen only if it is exposed to electrical charges at exactly the right energy range.

The gallium indium phosphide, which absorbs ultraviolet and visible light, produces electrons of the right energy range to release hydrogen, while the gallium arsenide, which absorbs infrared light, is ideal for releasing oxygen. A protective transparent coating is used to protect the gallium arsenide from damage by water when it is immersed, but the other semiconductor is stable in water and needs no protection.

In the experiments, a tungsten lamp was used to produce the light to drive the cells. In practice, sunlight concentrated by a lens would have done as well. The main limitation is the cost of the devices, which make the hydrogen they produce three times as expensive as that produced by stripping it from natural gas with superheated steam. The two chemists are now looking for cheaper semiconductors to do the same job.



Lighting the way: Eddie Matthews, the principal keeper, will stay on as attendant to the Lizard lighthouse, where he has served for ten years

Lighthouse veteran is replaced by computer

FOR the keeper of the Lizard lighthouse, on the southernmost point in mainland Britain, yesterday was "the saddest day of my working life". It was the day Eddie Matthews, Britain's longest-serving keeper, handed over control to a computer. The twin-towered lighthouse in Cornwall is now controlled from Harwich, Essex.

The move means there are only three manned lighthouses remaining as the Trinity House automation programme nears completion.

Mr Matthews, 59, and 42 years with Trinity House, said he understood why the decision had been taken, with technology moving on; the disadvantage was that "you take away the local knowledge and the eyes of the keepers", essential when people fell off cliffs or swimmers got into trouble.

The first lighthouse on the notoriously hazardous Lizard peninsula was built in 1619 by Sir John Killigrew, a Cornishman. The present light was completed in 1751.

cases after evening

Freedom at last for Weatherfield One

By a Correspondent

THE nation will breathe a collective sigh of relief tonight as the Weatherfield One walks free from jail after a three-week spell behind bars for a crime she did not commit — in a place that does not exist.

Champagne corks will pop as Deirdre Rachid of Coronation Street finally gets bail pending an appeal, after a public campaign backed by T-shirts, graffiti and newspaper columns. Even the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary were roped into the uproar that followed the conviction of Mrs Rachid — the actress Anne Kirkbride — and legal experts were quoted with tongues stuck firmly in cheek.

Rovers Return that glasses will be raised in celebration. Such is the audience involvement in the programme — ranging from the sad and mad to the post-modernists who smother their involvement under irony — that thousands called Granada TV in protest at the sentence.

The plot was successful in pushing up Coronation Street's ratings to 16.47 million viewers, compared with 15.83 million for BBC rival EastEnders. Tonight will continue the drama when the world's most unlikely Cleopatra is caught in a cliché with old flame Mike Baldwin by his wife, "Eec" as they say in Weatherfield, "by teck."

It will not be only in the

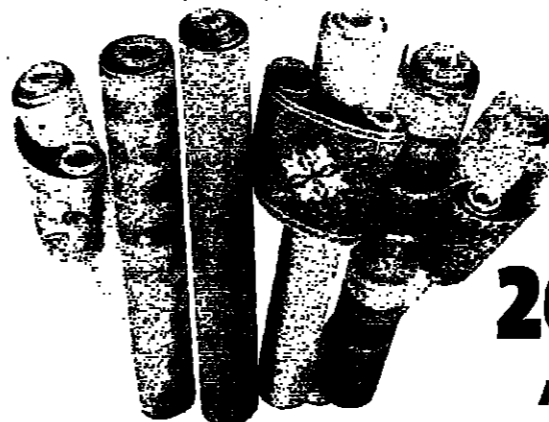
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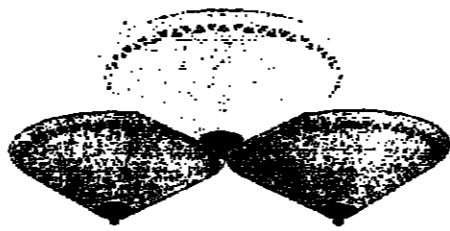
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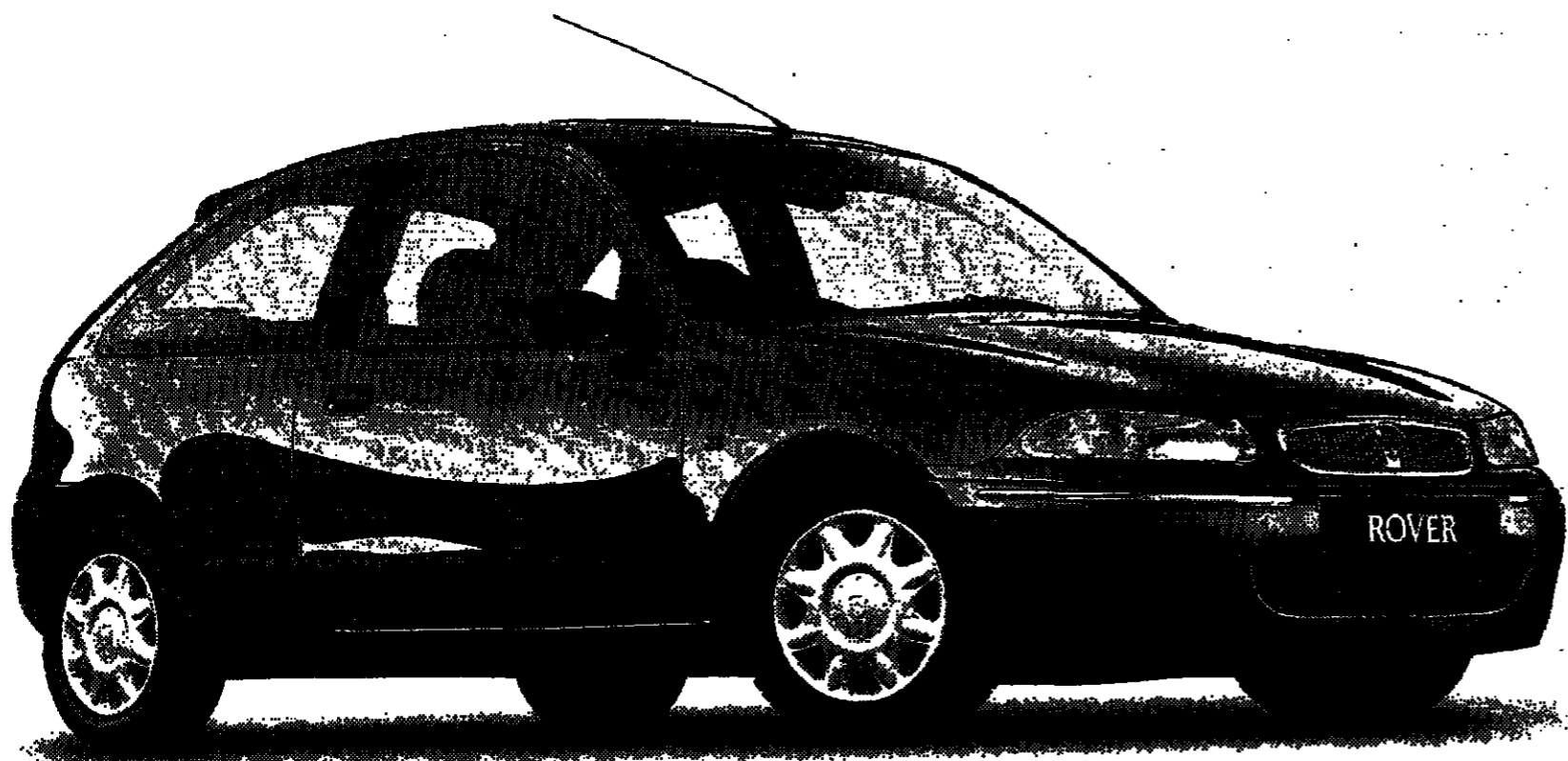
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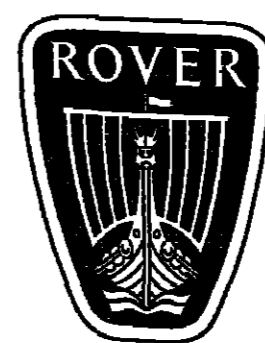
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Shake-up pledged to beat detention centre shambles

BY RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

A LARGE expansion of immigration and asylum detention centres is planned by the Government after the Home Office admitted yesterday that the present system was a "shambles and mess".

The overhaul, which will include the imposition of greater controls at existing centres, came as the Home Office prepared to renew for three years Group 4's contract to run Campsfield House detention centre at Kidlington near Oxford. Mike O'Brien, the Immigration Minister, announced that private-sector firms would manage the expanded network of detention centres in which the regimes would be much more structured.

The minister unveiled his plans as Sir David Ramsbotham, the Chief Inspector of

Prisons, published a report into Campsfield House which criticised government policy towards detention and aspects of the way Group 4 runs the centre, which currently houses 97 detainees. Sir David warned that unless there were more controls at Campsfield House there was a danger of a repeat of the riot there last August.

Mr O'Brien criticised campaigners who attacked conditions at Campsfield House as well as pressure groups and lawyers who delayed the processing of asylum applications. He said: "This report must be a blow to some of the pressure groups who had said that detention should be ended and particularly those who are trying to close Campsfield House."

Mr O'Brien said of Sir

David's inspection report: "It is likely to result in more detention centres, an expansion of the estate to reduce the reliance on the temporary use of prisons as resources allow. It is likely that the relaxed regimes will be much more controlled in the future."

He admitted that — with 50,000 asylum applications currently with the Home Office and 23,000 in the appeals system — the current system was in disarray. He said: "It is a mess. Sir David has described it as a shambles, and there is no contention on that between us."

Sir David's inspection report found that the Government had set aside £8.2 million in 1997-98 to remove 7,500 people. It cost £5,800 to remove a person needing a security or medical escort and an average £680 for an unescorted deportation. In 1996 21,000 people were removed at ports and 5,000 as a result of enforcement action.

The report is critical both of immigration detention policy and some of Group 4's running of the centre, including the long hours staff had to work which left them "exhausted".

Sir David called for judicial oversight of decisions to detain immigrants, the appointment of a Director of Detainees, a separate detention service and legislation to define the exact powers of staff when they use force in centres. The report



Campsfield House detention centre: the contract for the private firm running it will be renewed for three years

said that Group 4 had made significant improvements since the last inspection in spite of "totally inadequate contract monitoring and compliance arrangements, some of which defy rational explanation".

Sir David said he was disturbed at the condition and untidiness of many inmates' rooms and criticised the absence of staff in the visits room. He condemned the general lack of purpose in the centre although, as the detainees are facing no criminal charges, they cannot be forced to take part in activities.

"The regime was relaxed and almost unstructured; there was free association throughout the centre", Sir

David said. In spite of male detainees being banned from entering the female wing without an escort, eight women had become pregnant since 1993 which resulted in five abortions.

The report says: "We found a pleasant but altogether aimless atmosphere in the occupied areas. We also found great variation in the amount of contact that Group 4 staff had with detainees. There should be a concerted effort by all staff to motivate and encourage detainees to make use of the activities available to them."

Managers at the centre complained that staff were required to work too long hours with supervisors complaining

of seven consecutive 12-hour shifts which, if renegotiated, meant a loss of pay. Ordinary custody officers worked overtime to supplement basic pay and towards the end of the week were "exhausted".

The report said: "We continue to have concern that Group 4 staff were working scheduled shifts and overtime which placed too much strain on individual staff to the inevitable detriment of their effectiveness." Last night Group 4 said it had changed shift patterns at the centre without any loss of pay to staff.

The Refugee Council described Sir David's report as "timely", saying he had highlighted many of the "terrible problems" faced by asy-

lum seekers detained in the UK. "More than half of those detained now have not had any decision about their asylum claims, and while detained they have fewer rights than people charged with a criminal offence," Rachel Rees, the communications director, said.

Evan Harris, Liberal Democrat MP for Oxford West and Abingdon, condemned the Government's response to the report as "churlish and disappointing". He said: "They reject the serious criticism of the use of prison spaces for detaining asylum seekers, and they give no view about the recommendation that there should be judicial oversight of decisions to detain."

TIME	ACTIVITY	VENUE
08:00-09:00	WASH/TOILETS	WASH/TOILETS
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A typical timetable: the activities were criticised

Doctors raise fears over top mental hospital

BY RUSSELL JENKINS

SENIOR medical staff at Ashworth Hospital, which houses dangerous psychopaths, have expressed "grave concern" at the way it is being run.

Fifteen forensic psychiatrists at the hospital on Merseyside have written to senior management to complain about the chief executive, Hilary Hodge. In the letter, which was leaked to the media, they claim that she has interfered with clinical affairs, made "serious errors" and made decisions which "should be the prerogative of clinicians".

The dispute centres on the recent appointment of Bob Johnson, a former prison psychiatrist, as head of therapy. The psychiatrists claim that the post was not advertised and that no formal appointment procedure took place.

The letter, to Paul Lever, chairman of the hospital authority board, comes as the Fallon inquiry into allegations that patients had access to drugs and pornography is about to resume public hearings.

Gerish Shetty stood down as director of medicine at the hospital last month and formally resigned on Wednesday. Insiders suggest that he quit over changes being made by the new management without consultation.

Meanwhile, many of the hospital's 900 nurses are pursuing a grievance over pay and conditions to an industrial tribunal this month and union leaders refuse to rule out industrial action. One senior

figure described morale within the hospital as "very poor".

The dispute between the psychiatrists and the management comes as Ms Hodge and her team are trying to institute new management procedures. She took up her post in October, eight months after her predecessor left in the wake of the allegations that led to the setting up of the inquiry.

The psychiatrists' letter reveals what they call "grave concerns" over management practices. These include allegations that the new head of therapy's qualifications and experience were not subject to proper evaluation, that clinical procedure is being "circumvented" and that senior doctors' concerns are not being addressed.

Hugh Lamont, a spokesman for the hospital, said that it was undergoing rapid change after the events that led to the Fallon inquiry. Inevitably this had led to anxiety, and he said: "During a time of change people feel concern and worry. Management has to make the process as quick and painless as possible. This sort of thing [the leaked letter] can be sorted out internally."

The hospital issued a formal statement: "Issues between the consultant body and the executive team are internal matters to be discussed and resolved within the hospital. The consultants and the executive team agree that it is not appropriate for these discussions to take place through the media."

Thousands phone over HIV midwife

BY IAN MURRAY, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

THOUSANDS of worried mothers rang an emergency helpline opened yesterday after a midwife who worked at three maternity hospitals over the past decade disclosed that she was HIV-positive.

Calls were received from more than 3,000 mothers, even though only 60 women have been identified as being at slight risk of having been infected with the virus, which leads to Aids. These 60 women had been given surgical treatment by the midwife while their babies were being delivered.

Addenbrooke's NHS Trust in Cambridge, for whom the midwife was working until ten days ago, is trying to find out how long she may have carried the infection. The midwife was working abroad for five years after she qualified in 1990, but so far she has been unable to show exactly when she became infected.

Because of this, all the hospitals in Britain where she worked have traced the women who were given surgical treatment by the midwife during her deliveries. The Wesham Park Hospital at Slough, Berkshire, where she trained between 1988 and 1990; the Rosie Maternity Hospital in Cambridge where she worked from September, 1995 until this month; and the Princess Alexandra Hospital in Harlow, Essex, where she did advanced training last December, have contacted all the mothers who might be at risk.

"She may have had HIV ten years ago but we simply do not know," a spokeswoman at Addenbrooke's said. "We are erring on the side of caution in tracing everyone."

Other women ringing the helpline, on 0800-100 1343, are being offered counselling and screening if they want it, although they are being assured that there is no reason why any of them could have caught the virus from the midwife.

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Couple sell up to pay for coast challenge

By TIM JONES

A COUPLE have sold their home and most of their possessions to follow a dream of walking around Britain's 4,600-mile coastline.

Chris and Linda Peacher believe that they will be the first pair of grandparents to complete the trek, which they expect to take about a year.

They will have a gentle start on the fadlands of East Anglia next month, but are already dreading the Highlands. Mr Peacher, 46, said: "Although we have been doing 16-mile walks a day as part of our training, we haven't been able to tackle any hills."

Mr and Mrs Peacher have sold their house in Norwich for £36,000. Their tyre business will be run by their three children. The couple, who have three grandchildren, hope to raise money for multiple sclerosis patients.

Children spurn heroes over the detested sprout

If they won't eat their greens, not even Arnold Schwarzenegger can tempt them, reports Ian Murray

IT IS something many parents might already have suspected after a showdown at the dining table: not even the combined forces of Arnold Schwarzenegger and the Spice Girls could persuade a child to eat a disliked vegetable.

An opinion poll for the Cancer Research Campaign has been trying to find out what sort of inducement would be necessary to induce children to eat a vegetable they detest. The answer is that the price of the most successful bribe — a ticket to a pop concert — is too high, and that even persuasion from celebrities would make no difference.

In the end, parents might be better off just talking. While only 16 per cent of children said that famous people might influence them, nearly half said that they would listen to their father or mother, and a quarter said their grandparents were most influential.

Three out of four children aged 7 to 12 dislike at least one vegetable, and greens are especially hated. Brussels sprouts were the most detested, followed by pumpkin, spinach, broad beans and swedes. Broccoli, cabbage,

mushrooms, onions and runner beans are tolerated by about half. Only carrots, potatoes, sweetcorn and cauliflower are enjoyed by a clear majority. Children from the better-off families were the fussiest eaters.

With a third of cancers caused by diet, the campaign wanted to find out what children would demand to eat enough vegetables to get them used to a balanced diet. Gordon McVie, director-general of the campaign, said: "What we found was that children were open to bribes but the stakes had to be pretty high."

"Everyday pastimes such as watching television or playing computer games held little sway. The activity that would be able to make the most kids eat their greens was going to see their favourite band in concert — not something you could do every night. If children are hooked on veg at

an early age, then they are far less likely to have teenage tantrums. Kids may think they have the upper hand and they may have a clear idea about what they will trade in to get out of eating their vegetables, but we are worried that they are unaware of the real price they may be unwittingly paying in terms of their future health."

The 437 children from 51 regions questioned in the Mori poll were asked what activity would need to be offered or put at risk to induce them to eat a vegetable they disliked. The scale of influence was: listening to the radio, 32 per cent; playing with a cyber pet, 37 per cent; reading, 42 per cent; going shopping, 43 per cent; playing with Nintendo or Gameboy, 45 per cent; watching television and videos, 56 per cent; going to a disco or party, 54 per cent; playing football, 59 per cent;

horse riding, 63 per cent. The greatest pulling power, and the most expensive bribe, was going to see a favourite band in concert, which scored 70 per cent. Questioned on celebrity persuaders, 4 per cent said they could be influenced by the Spice Girls, Ryan Giggs, Arnold Schwarzenegger and David Beckham and would influence 1 per cent.

The poll was organised for the campaign by Iceland Foods, who last year launched a range of flavoured vegetables, including chocolate-coated carrots. After initial success, sales fell and the "wacky vegetables" were withdrawn. Malcolm Walker, chairman of the Iceland Group, said: "The important thing is that we raised awareness of the need to eat plenty of vegetables and we are gradually increasing sales of them all the time now. That must be good for the health of the nation."

Iceland has now introduced a coloured chip, mixing potato with carrot or spinach. Mr Walker said: "If children like them, they may decide spinach on its own isn't so bad after all."



Elizabeth Johnson, who has not been seen since she went to visit her boyfriend

Fears grow for nurse missing since Easter

By ADAM FRESCO

DETECTIVES searching for a nurse who has been missing for almost a week yesterday began dragging a river near her home.

Elizabeth Johnson, 26, a psychiatric nurse who works at Homerton Hospital in Hackney, East London, has not been seen since she left her flat in Shoreditch to visit her boyfriend in Wapping late at night on Good Friday.

Police say it is inconceivable she would leave her sister Caroline, 16, who was staying with her for a week, alone overnight as she would not even let her go to the shops on her own. No money has been taken from Miss Johnson's account and they can find no reason for her to vanish. It is thought she set off on foot to visit her boyfriend.

Police search teams using dogs and a helicopter have already scoured a local nature reserve she liked to visit on Hackney Marshes and the area around the River Lea. Yesterday they also began house-to-house inquiries near where she lives and to drag the River Lea.

Her parents, who live in Staffordshire but travelled to London on Sunday a few hours after the alarm was

raised, have appealed for their daughter, who is 5ft 2in with curly black hair, to get in touch. Alan Johnson, a company director, said: "Please let us know that you are all right. There is no problem that is too big it cannot be solved. If you want to hide away for any reason that is also no problem but please let us know you are safe."

Her mother, June, added: "We are absolutely devastated. She was a happy-go-lucky girl. This is totally out of character for her."

Appealing to her daughter she said: "We know you are out there somewhere. Please let us know you are safe even if you don't want to be found."

Detective Inspector Dick Bond, who is leading the inquiry, said: "It's fair to say we are becoming increasingly concerned for her as the hours and days go by. This is completely out of character. She is a young good looking girl with a steady job and nice flat and there is no reason we can find for her to leave all that."

Miss Johnson was wearing black zip-up ankle boots, a charcoal grey fleece top, a black puffer jacket and a black knitted hat.

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Women do the business as farms branch out

By LIN JENKINS

FARMERS' wives are the new agricultural entrepreneurs, diversifying into shops and nature trails while their husbands complain about crippling interference from Brussels.

Women are also increasingly managing the finances and the complex paperwork of quotas and subsidies, the Women's Farming Union annual conference was told yesterday.

It is the women who have branched out into pick-your-own produce, children's farms, farm shops, farm trails and bed and breakfast, yet they are still not being paid nor being made legal partners in the businesses they run.

Ruth Gasson, research fellow at the University of London's Wye College, told the conference at the college in Kent.

Agriculture is lagging behind the general social outlook in its attitude to equal opportunities, she said. A recent survey found that half of all farmers had identified a successor and of those 76 per cent named a son or sons and only 6 per cent a daughter.

Dr Gasson said most men were in farming through inheritance whereas most women ended up there through marriage. Yet studies found that they no longer spent their days baking, tending the kitchen garden and collecting the eggs.

With farming now so much less labour intensive than in the past, some women worked 60 to 80 hours a week on the farm. While only one in ten farms is run by a lone woman, on many others a husband and wife are the sole labour force: at least "until a son comes back from college and she is told she can go back to the kitchen". About 70 per cent of farmers' wives do the greater part of the office work and 75 per cent keep the financial records. They are also expected to deal with callers, fetch spare parts for machinery, pick up drugs from the vet and "take responsibility for the reproduction of the labour force", Dr Gasson said.

"They are also expected to be a safety valve and sounding board in an increasingly isolated business, mediator between father and son, and oil the wheels to make the farm run. But none of these tasks is regarded as proper work."

She said that in an era when women expect and demand to have their own careers, with their own salary and pension, farming had to change. "Women are contributing more than they did in the past to the average farm business."

Research found that 27 per cent ran some sort of diversified enterprise on the farm such as letting holiday cottages or running an open farm. However, legal status was slow in coming. In 1980 56 per cent of farmers' wives were recognised as a partner or director and in 1996 that figure had risen to only 66 per cent. "We will not see equal opportunity in farming until there is a radical change in farm succession. The attitudes of the rest of society are slow in penetrating the male-dominated world of agriculture."

The union, which has about 1,000 members, was set up 19 years ago to fight to protect the Kent apple industry from cheap French imports of Golden Delicious. Its members focus on providing a link between farms and the consumer, promoting British produce.

Meg Stroude, its chairwoman, who farms in Sussex with her husband, said: "Women's role in farming has changed dramatically. What they want now is recognition that they are doing a proper job."

"We still have a long way to go to get equality for women on the farm."



Ruth Gasson, who said that women's role in managing farms had gone unrewarded

Archers misses a bull's eye

By OUR AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

ROLE models for go-getting farmers' wives, whether in fiction or life, are few and far between in a male-dominated world.

Even *The Archers*, always sensitive to social trends, has been fairly restrained in promoting female entrepreneurs on the farm. The best example is Pat Archer, who ten years ago found a commercial outlet for the organic yoghurt and ice cream she and her husband, Tony, produce on Bridge Farm.

Helen Browning, chair-

woman of the Soil Association and one of Britain's leading organic farmers, offers a more inspiring example than any of her fictional counterparts. In 1989 she took over management of the 1,336-acre Eastbrook Farm in Wiltshire from her father and decided to convert to organic methods.

She now has an on-farm butchery and runs a thriving mail-order business for her organic beef, pork, lamb and sausages.

However, women are still

nearly invisible in the higher ranks of the National Farmers' Union. Mary James, who runs a beef farm near Bristol with her husband, is the only woman out of the 93 members who make up the union's ruling council.

"I have been in full legal partnership on the farm since the day we married 30 years ago," she said. "But I am lucky to have an enlightened husband."

"We still have a long way to go to get equality for women on the farm."



Standing tall: guards keeping watch in Lincolnshire yesterday over a field of asparagus intended for Tesco

Security guards stop thieves eating into asparagus profits

By MICHAEL HORNSEY AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

SECURITY guards have been hired by a supermarket chain to protect its asparagus from thieves exploiting the flood chaos. Patrols began yesterday around fields in the Lincolnshire fens after Tesco found that asparagus worth about £500 had been stolen.

More guards were on standby to protect suppliers' farms in the Vale of Evesham and Suffolk. Andrew Carpenter, Tesco's asparagus buyer, said: "There is always a big demand for the first English asparagus, and we cannot afford to see any of our crop disappearing."

The thieves struck at the edges of fields during the early morning or at night. They would have had little trouble selling their haul, and with asparagus fetching £1.99 for a bundle of ten spears, it was easy and profitable pickings.

"It looks like the work of casual thieves who took advantage of the confusion caused by the floods, which prevented growers from keep-

ing as close an eye on their fields as they would normally." Thieves may also have calculated that the floods, particularly in the Vale of Evesham, one of the main asparagus areas, will reduce the size of the crop and make it more valuable. Harvesting of English asparagus, prized for its strong, sweet flavour, usually starts about now and runs through to mid-June. Growers said yesterday that the heavy rain would delay harvesting but would not wipe out the crop. Victor Aveling, chairman of the Asparagus Growers' Association, who farms in the Cambridgeshire fens, said: "My asparagus is looking very damp, rather as if the sea had just come in and gone out. But, provided that crops are not left standing under water for a long time, no permanent damage should have been done."

John Colegrave, who grows asparagus near Banbury, Oxfordshire, said the heavy rains could turn out to be a blessing if followed by warm weather in late April and May. "We have lost some crop to frost rather than the floods. But the main harvest comes in a month's time, and if we get a bumper crop."

Paul Lewis, spokesman for the RSPB, said: "Many of these birds are very site-faithful and are likely to wait around hoping for the water levels to fall. As a result the breeding season is a complete washout."

and crops in storage. Other farmers watched helplessly as livestock was swept away in the floods, and some vegetable growers lost their entire crops. Ian Bowers, who farms in Northamptonshire, is to claim about £10,000 for 180 ewes that were drowned by rising waters from the River Nene.

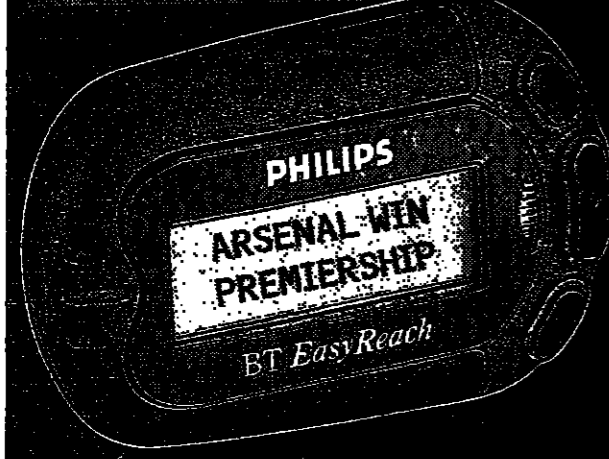
The Nene washes, outside Peterborough, are four metres above sea level, their highest since 1947. The two reserves support just over 30 pairs of black-tailed godwits, three-quarters of the British population, and are important breeding grounds for several hundred pairs of snipe, lapwings and redshanks plus breeding ducks such as gadwalls and mallards.

Paul Lewis, spokesman for the RSPB, said: "Many of these birds are very site-faithful and are likely to wait around hoping for the water levels to fall. As a result the breeding season is a complete washout."

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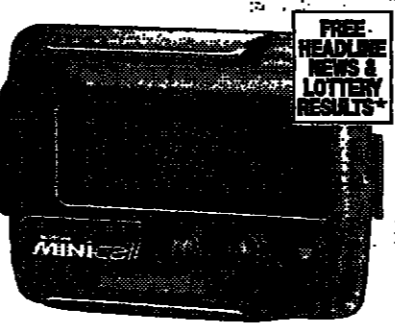
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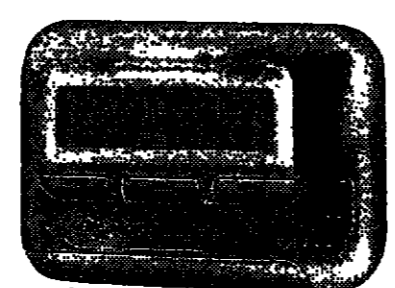
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Thatcher's remarkable wordsmith dies aged 78

By PHILIP WEBSTER
POLITICAL EDITOR

THE speechwriter who spanned three Conservative eras and gave Margaret Thatcher her celebrated "the lady's not for turning" line, died yesterday at the age of 78.

Baroness Thatcher and John Major led the tributes to the "remarkable talent" of Sir Ronald Millar, one of the most popular backroom figures in Tory politics. He was the man successive leaders relied on to come to the rescue at moments of crisis in the laborious process of penning the speeches for big occasions.

Lady Thatcher said she had lost "a very great friend who contributed so much to my being able to express what I felt and meant in words that I think only an author could have written, particularly during my early days."

She added: "When you are struggling for words, struggling to put something in a way which will make an impact, Ronnie knew just how to do it. He was also a very great friend and he thoroughly believed in everything we tried to do."

Mr Major said he would remember Sir Ronald as a "warm friend on a cold day". For years he had been a source of wise advice and wry comment with an insight that never let him down. "His phrase-making was magical but I shall remember him always for his sense of fun."

Lord Tebbit, a former Cabinet minister and Conservative



In 1980, Millar wrote the words that set the tone for the Thatcher years: "You turn if you want to. The lady's not for turning"

standing the person speaking and the audience being addressed and using as few words as possible to join them together. He was a very thoughtful man and had the wonderful ability to mix knowledge and humour."

He was a distinguished playwright and screenwriter before turning to politics aged 50. In 1964 he had a hit with the musical *Robert and Elizabeth*, and he adapted four C.P. Snow novels for the stage.

will always be remembered. The importance of the speech is recalled by Lady Thatcher in her memoirs. "The party was worried and so was I. Our strategy was the right one, but the price of putting it into effect was proving so high. . . However I was utterly convinced of one thing: there was no chance of achieving that fundamental change of attitudes which was required to wrench Britain out of decline if people believed

that we were prepared to alter course under pressure. I made the point with a line provided by Ronnie Millar."

Mrs Thatcher's declaration: "You turn if you want to. The lady's not for turning," was to set the tone for the rest of her administration.

Sir Ronald was always at her side for subsequent conference speeches, and in 1984 was in her suite in the Grand Hotel in Brighton minutes before the IRA bomb exploded.

When she became Prime Minister in 1979, he suggested that she face the world's press with the words attributed to St Francis, beginning: "Where there is discord, may we bring harmony". She promptly learnt them by heart.

Sir Ronald had begun writing speeches for Edward Heath — causing Lady Thatcher initially to regard him with suspicion. When she resigned, he was surprised to be invited back to Downing Street as a speechwriter by John Major, and was only persuaded to accept by his friend Chris Patten. He could inject Major speeches with the same defiance that he brought to Lady Thatcher's. In May 1993, after disastrous election results, Mr Major was being urged to drop some of his reforms to education and health. "Despite difficulties and setbacks we intend to carry them forward. Give up? Give over!" The quip was, typically, Sir Ronald's.

Peter Stothard, page 20
Obituary, page 23



Ian Hart, a Tory councillor, and Ros Mand, a supporter, canvassing two residents, Kevin and Patricia Simpson

Tories rally round showpiece council in election countdown

By ALEXANDRA FREAN, LOCAL GOVERNMENT CORRESPONDENT

CONSERVATIVE activists are fighting hard to keep control of Wandsworth, the London borough long claimed as their showpiece local authority.

In the countdown to local elections on May 7, canvassers have been issued with computer print-outs which show voters' stated intentions at the last two elections. In the ward of Furzedown, all 6,000 homes have been visited already. On Sunday mornings

22 wards were up for grabs this time because they were marginal. He forecast: "I think we could lose a couple of wards, but I do not think we will lose Wandsworth."

Ian Hart, 36, an information technology manager, was elected as Conservative councillor for the Furzedown ward in 1994. He says that he has seen a steady shift of support towards the Tories since just before Christmas: "A lot of traditional Labour voters have said they are going to vote Conservative."

One voter, Patricia Simpson, a mother of two, said that the Conservatives had canvassed her twice already: "No-one from the Conservative Party has ever knocked on my door before, but I will be voting Labour. I always do."

Philip Shepherd, who runs an adventure playground for a neighbouring borough, said that he voted Conservative at the last local elections, but he doubted whether he would this time round: "You could

have put a bit more on the taxes and spent on building better play facilities."

Yesterday the Conservatives launched their national campaign for next month's elections, promising a "fresh future" with lower council taxes, better services and new checks against town hall corruption. The party holds seven of the 166 councils where elections will be held.

The elections involve all the 32 London boroughs and one new unitary council, the Isle of Wight, and a third of the seats in 36 metropolitan district councils, nine unitary councils and 88 non-metropolitan district councils.

Lord Parkinson, the Tory chairman, said the fightback had started with the party winning an extra 55 seats in by-elections since last May: "William Hague has made it clear that he sees local government as where the Tory recovery begins."

Leading article, page 21

Dixons head defends donations to parties

By VALERIE ELLIOTT, WHITEHALL EDITOR

A LEADING Tory businessman yesterday defended the citizen's right to give as much cash as he or she wants to political parties, and in secret.

Sir Stanley Kalms, chairman of the Dixons group, was the first prominent political donor to speak to Lord Neill of Bladen's inquiry into the future of party funding. He argued that it was up to politicians and other public servants to ensure that ministers were not influenced by wealthy donors.

He also accused Tony Blair of allowing himself to be compromised by meeting Bernie Ecclestone, the Formula One chief who had donated £1 million to Labour, at Downing Street to discuss tobacco sponsorship. The Government's final decision on the matter was "tainted", he said of the Ecclestone

episode: "I would admit that prima facie there is a certain amount of discomfort about this example. . . The moment you get to see a minister on a specific rather than a general [matter] then you break every rule of the game."

Outside the inquiry he added: "If there is to be a donation, a meeting and a benefit, it is not transparent and that's wrong. But if there's a donation, a meeting and no particular benefit, then that's perfectly legitimate."

He said that someone in Downing Street and even Mr Blair himself should have seen there might well be a connection between the donation and the meeting. "If you are going to take £1 million from a donor you keep him away from a decision. The tainted part is that the decision on smoking was not as robust as it might

have been." The Ecclestone donation was also condemned by Martin Linton, Labour MP for Battersea, who said such gifts risked creating a "sleaze democracy" and compromised the integrity of parties that accepted them.

Ministers have strenuously denied that the donation influenced their decision last year to exempt Formula One from the ban on tobacco advertising but, on the advice of Lord Neill, they handed back the money when the payment became public.

Sir Stanley, a prominent Eurosceptic, also confirmed that Dixons would no longer be making political donations to the Conservative Party. "I was comfortable supporting the Conservative Party but times move on."

John Lloyd, page 20

Dixons

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Hillary deploys her own hair force

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

THE globetrotting antics of President Clinton have placed new pressure on hairdressers responsible for his wife's ever-changing locks.

Already cited as a hair-hopper in the American lexicon of slang, Hillary Clinton has brought new meaning to the word during sorties abroad, inviting her regular Washington stylist to tend her coiffure between stops.

Isabelle Goetz, who was accompanying Mrs Clinton in Chile yesterday and also went on the President's Africa tour, works at the Washington salon of Cristophe, the Beverly Hills stylist who famously cut Mr Clinton's hair on the Los Angeles International Airport tarmac in 1993 for \$200 (£120).

After the Hairgate embarrassment, Mrs Clinton ended the personal contract with Cristophe, turning to local salons. An average Cristophe cut now costs \$60, with blow-dry styling an extra \$45, but her office insisted yesterday that the US taxpayer shouldered none of the costs for Ms Goetz's trips. However, she is travelling on government aircraft and sharing hotel rooms with Clinton aides - paid for by taxpayers.

Nancy Reagan often took Julius Bengston on long foreign visits as her "personal guest" and he was paid from her own funds. Barbara Bush, whose short white tresses were simply styled, tended to use hairdressers in the country she was visiting.

Mrs Clinton, long obsessed with the look of her hair, says: "I don't want to wake up every day and know what I'm going to look like... I just find hair fun, because it's one part of your body that can change."

Botha fury erupts as contempt trial is delayed

FROM SAM KILEY IN GEORGE, WESTERN CAPE

P.W. BOTHA, showing the ferocious temper which once made him the most feared man in southern Africa, yesterday exploded with rage in a George courtroom after his trial on contempt charges was postponed for six weeks.

Mr Botha, South Africa's President from 1984 to 1989, shouted that he was "not satisfied with the proceedings" moments after the black magistrate stood down and set June 1 for the case to resume. He then attacked his own legal advisers, who tried to persuade him to keep his views to himself.

Once dubbed the Groot Krokodil (the Great Crocodile), Mr Botha snapped that he would not be told what to do. He insisted that he would speak his mind and reject evidence heard on Wednesday which linked him to decisions to eliminate political opponents during and after the 1986 state of emergency which he imposed.

Mr Botha, 82, railed in Afrikaans and complained that his legal team, led by Lapa Laubscher, had been unable to cross-examine Paul van Zyl, executive secretary of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The commission had laid the contempt charges after he ignored a summons to attend its hearings into the State Security Council, which Mr Botha chaired for 11 years from 1978.

Minutes of the council, read to the court by Mr van Zyl, said that Mr Botha had chaired meetings of the council, attended by security force commanders and his senior ministers, at which decisions to "eliminate" and "neutralise" people were taken.

The documents also showed that the council sanctioned the establishment of a Third Force of black fighters to disrupt the "revolutionary forces" struggling to end apartheid.

Diary constraints of court assessors and Mr Botha's counsel forced the postponement of the case. But Mr Botha ignored reality to complain that a plot was being hatched by the commission to "destroy my image, and through me the image of my [Afrikaner] people".

Reluctantly speaking English in the garden of his home in nearby Wilderness, after storming out of the court and leaving his legal team speechless, he said he had the right to the court's protection.

"But ungested evidence has been distributed through the world - I know, I saw it on television. I say it is my right as a citizen of South Africa that my legal advisers should cross-examine the witness - and the chairman of the commission, Bishop [Desmond] Tutu," Mr Botha said.

He demanded a face-to-face meeting with President Mandela to explain his role as head of the State Security Council which, according to documents dated July 10, 1986, presented to the court, had ordered the security police to spy on Archbishop Tutu and two other prominent South Africans now serving as truth commissioners.

Earlier in the day Mr van Zyl was at pains to insist that the commission had no intention to humiliate Mr Botha. "Archbishop Tutu said that if he suspected that there was any attempt to humiliate Mr Botha that I would be fired," Mr van Zyl said.



Officials keep watch from their van on two 6,000-gallon tanks of napalm in a Kansas City freight depot. The shipment of the Vietnam War-era defoliant, winding its way across the United States with no apparent destination agreed, was being held in Kansas while the US Navy searched for a waste management company to

US row over napalm shipment

deal with it (Tom Rhodes writes). The napalm, which the authorities said posed no danger, is the first in a shipment weighing more than 10,000 tons the US Navy had hoped to recycle from a weapons site in California. After two decades some of the 34,000 canisters had started to leak, contaminating farmland. Under an agreement between the navy and Pollution Control Industries, a recycling company in Illinois, the agent

once used to torch villages was destined to become fuel for cement kilns. But Robert Campbell, the company's president, withdrew this week, saying it had been caught in a tug of war between government departments and Congress, where members complained that the navy had failed to calm public fears.

Bay of Pigs survivors 'resorted to cannibalism'

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN NEW YORK

A GROUP of Cuban exiles, who escaped alive from the Bay of Pigs debacle in 1961, resorted to cannibalism while adrift at sea for 16 days, one of them disclosed last night.

Julio Pestonit, 57, told Fox News Channel in New York that he ate the flesh and drank the blood of comrades who had died of starvation and dehydration. He said: "I did it because I was desperate. I

wanted to live. People were dying one after the other."

Señor Pestonit, then 20, was one of 1,500 ideologically driven exiles who launched an invasion of Cuba, backed by the CIA, in an attempt to topple the Communist regime of Fidel Castro. The attack was easily repulsed by Cuban government forces. About 200 men died and 1,200 were taken prisoner.

The cannibalism happened on a rickety sailing boat, carrying 22 exiles who had

eluded capture. The group had neither food nor water and men soon began to die.

Señor Pestonit said the group, driven by hunger, reluctantly considered eating a corpse. He said: "We all agreed - we needed to use one of the dead bodies." His commando knife was used to cut up the body, but he could not bring himself to watch.

Señor Pestonit said: "I did eat some of the interior of the body that was extended to me. It was crazy. It was like being

in hell." He and the others also drank blood from bodies.

After 16 days, the survivors were rescued, but seven of the original 22 had died.

The group had sworn to keep their cannibalism a secret, but Señor Pestonit said he was breaking his vow out of anger towards the Kennedy Administration, which failed to provide the air support to the invasion that it had promised. He said: "They keep on excusing John Kennedy. He killed my friends in the boat

by failing to rescue them on time."

In a separate development, American investigators in Nicaragua have discovered human remains that are apparently those of two pilots who died in the days of the invasion. Crispin Garcia and Juan Gonzalez, two Cuban exiles, are believed to have died in plane crash on April 17, 1961, when they were unable to reach their base in Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua, after a bombing sortie over Cuba.

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Pol Pot, discarded puppeteer of terror

Before they killed their terrified victims, often by a blow with a hoe to the back of the head beside the grave the condemned had been forced to dig, the black-garbed Khmer Rouge automata would usually tell them: "To keep you is no gain, to destroy you is no loss."



Cambodians will waste little time mourning the murderous former leader of the Khmer Rouge, writes James Pringle

Ironically, in the end, that was what his erstwhile followers thought of Pol Pot, "Brother Number One" of the Khmer Rouge. By the time he died in northwest Cambodia on Wednesday night, he had outlived his usefulness. Pol Pot had been discarded, just as he himself had discarded a million Cambodians.



When he first went to Paris to study, a fellow student called him a joyful, pleasant boy who loved life

Certainly there was justice in such a fate. After all Pol Pot — charismatic as many tyrants are, and eloquent, plausible and patient, who ranked in 20th-century demagogues alongside Hitler, Stalin and Mao — had betrayed and killed so many of his close comrades in the past. The most recent was Son Sen, his defence minister, another brute who ordered the executions of foreign tourists, last year. Pol Pot himself was betrayed when the rump of the Khmer Rouge condemned him as a short trial after Son Sen's death, making him a scapegoat for their collective crimes.

Pol Pot's death in a jungle hut, with only his second wife and young daughter present, came as no surprise. His first wife went insane and is believed to be in an asylum in China. Pol Pot knew too much and an international trial would have been embarrassing for many states including China, his chief backer at one time, Thailand and America.

Some individuals would also have found a trial awkward, including the present rulers in Phnom Penh under Hun Sen, a former Khmer Rouge military commander, one of the many former members of the faction now in the regime running the country.

According to French colonial records, Pol Pot, whose real name was Sakoth Sar, was born on May 25, 1928, in the northern province of Kompong Thom, in a relatively prosperous peasant family with links to the royal household. He would have been just short of his 70th birthday when he died on Wednesday, although other sources said he was in his seventies.

When he first went to Paris to study, a fellow student

called him "a joyful, pleasant boy who loved life". That was soon to change. After studying radio electronics in Paris in the 1950s, Pol Pot returned to Cambodia and soon joined the resistance to the country's then ruler, Prince Norodom Sihanouk — it was Prince Sihanouk who coined the name Khmer Rouge — in the rain-forest of northeastern Cambodia among the minority hill tribes.

Pol Pot soon emerged as leader of the embryonic Cambodian Communist Party,

ry Kissinger, after the overthrow of Prince Sihanouk.

The secret American bombing of Cambodia that had begun in 1969 and lasted until 1973 devastated the countryside, killing tens of thousands, and left a legacy of bitterness that gave Pol Pot his chance.

Pol Pot's political philosophy, imbibed in Paris cafes, was a mish-mash of Maoism and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The 18th-century French philosopher's *Social Contract* was a bible for left-wing Cambodians who were students in France in the 1950s, especially the opening words "Man is born free but is everywhere in chains".

Pol Pot used as his example not Mao's Cultural Revolution, but the even more disastrous 1958-59 Great Leap Forward and its mobilisation of China to create backyard steel furnaces and to grow grain. He called his revolution a "super-great leap forward".

Just as China's great leap ended in a famine that, some experts say, killed 30 million, Pol Pot's version likewise ended in suffering and death on a biblical scale on gigantic worksheds full of toiling human ants, with up to a million Cambodians out of seven million dead by execution, starvation and overwork. As portrayed in David Puttnam's film *The Killing Fields*, only by playing dead and dumb, or by acting stupid or mad, and certainly by concealing any trace of an education, was survival possible.

In Year Zero, as Pol Pot called the new society he created after taking Phnom Penh in April 1975, the Khmer Rouge brutally emptied the cities after executing all the defeated leaders.

The national library was turned into a national pig pen, and priceless Buddhist parchments were used by young teenage Khmer Rouge soldiers to roll cigarettes. By eliminating such bourgeois tendencies as using a toothbrush, wearing spectacles or speaking a foreign language, an instant classless society was to be created by banning families, money, religion and the professional classes. Once an



A boy examines the remains of some 2,000 of Pol Pot's victims at one of the many makeshift memorials that have been erected in Cambodia

Albanian visitor being escorted in French to a man labouring in the fields. The man, who was educated, made the fatal error of politely answering. After the Albanian visitor left, guards took the man away and clubbed him to death, Cambodians later told me.

All Pol Pot created, for a while, was a society in which peasant soldiers, often little more than children, could enforce the law with the death penalty imposed if their orders were not instantly obeyed. Children were taught to spy on their parents as in Hitler's Germany.

The robot-like black-uniformed Khmer Rouge, with their blank eyes that seemed to

stare 1,000 yards into the middle distance, used to warn the "new people", as those from the cities were called, to behave by invoking the mysterious Angka, the Organisation. In lines that recall George Orwell's "Big Brother", Khmer Rouge cadres used to warn Cambodians to observe constant discipline. "Angka has as many eyes as a pineapple," they said. "Angka sees everything you do." Even Orwell in 1984, his epic novel on totalitarianism, could not have dreamed of a society remotely like Democratic Kampuchea.

I saw some of that society when, in 1981, I was escorted into northern Cambodia with three other correspondents to see another Khmer Rouge leader, and watched children

making poisoned pointed *punji* sticks for use as boobytraps. It was not that there were not terrible inequities in Cambodia before the Khmer Rouge, and since. Doctors often did refuse treatment to poor peasants who could not afford to pay, as I witnessed in the late 1980s, and it was among the poorest of the poor — the so-called "basic strata" — that Pol Pot recruited his "pure and hard" fighters. These he indoctrinated into fanaticism and then invited them to repay the doctors and other educated people who had shunned them earlier.

Anyone who covered Cambodia, the "sideshow", as it was called, to the Vietnam War, could not but also blame the Americans who brought their B52 planes to pulverise

eastern Cambodia with carpet-bombing. It should not have been the Americans, some critics say, who expressed in recent days readiness to convey Pol Pot for trial in the third country. At such a trial, Dr Kissinger would also have had to explain his role in the destruction of what the present monarch, King Sihanouk, used to call "an oasis of peace".

In the 1980s, Cambodians still had inconsolable memories of the suffering in the killing fields. During the 1990s, however, hope began to grow with the signing of the Paris peace accord, the return of Prince Sihanouk and the 1993 UN-sponsored elections. The Khmer Rouge gradually became marginalised. West-

erners, seeking to impose their own values on Buddhist Cambodia, wanted Pol Pot and his henchmen to be brought to trial. Cambodians wished to put the past behind them. Nowadays, after a bloody coup by Hun Sen last year in Phnom Penh that overthrew the elected Government of Prince Norodom Ranariddh, Cambodians have other troubles on their minds.

They will pause to reflect on Pol Pot's passing, but now they pray that fresh elections scheduled for July will pass off peacefully. Given the mayhem of the past 30 years of war, since the conflict in Vietnam first spread into Cambodia, peace still seems far away.

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Obituary, page 23

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Scandal returns to haunt Gandhis

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN DELHI

A CLOSE Italian friend of Sonia Gandhi, the Indian opposition leader, has been named by investigators as the recipient of £4.4 million in "commissions" for helping to secure a controversial arms contract. It takes the Bofors scandal, one of India's most spectacular corruption cases, uncomfortably close to the Gandhi family.

The newly elected Government, however, is also being shaken by legal controversy, with criminal charges levelled or pending against several senior ministers for corruption and other alleged misdeeds. One of them, Bala Singh, the Communications Minister and a member of the Cabinet, said he would not resign after being accused of selling his vote in

parliament when a previous government was fighting for survival. Lal Krishna Advani, the Deputy Prime Minister and a senior member of the hardline Bharatiya Janata Party, which leads the coalition Government, could face criminal charges. He has been under investigation for alleged involvement in the destruction of the Babri Mosque in the holy city of Ayodhya by Hindu extremists in 1992. Mr Advani has long been associated with the Rashtriya Swayam-sevak Sangh, a militant Hindu group.

The Gandhi family has been haunted since the 1980s by the Bofors scandal, in which the Swedish arms manufacturer paid about £10 million to politicians, government officials and others to help to secure a huge contract for 155mm Howitzer guns. The late Rajiv Gandhi, Prime

Minister at the time, and his wife were friends of Ottavio Quattrocchi, an Italian businessman, against whom India has issued an arrest warrant. The Central Bureau of Investigation named him in Delhi High Court as the beneficiary of commissions. Officials said the Gandhis and Signor Quattrocchi were "on very intimate terms". The Congress Party, which Mrs Gandhi leads, said no conclusions could be drawn from the bureau's report.

Corruption is so endemic it is turning to farce. Jayalalitha Jayaram, a film star turned politician in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, has called on all ministers facing criminal charges to quit. The demand has been met with incredulity, given the extent of Ms Jayalalitha's mysteriously acquired wealth.

Pressure grows for Afghan accord

FROM ZAHID HUSSAIN IN ISLAMABAD

BILL RICHARDSON, the US Ambassador to the United Nations, is likely to prod warring Afghan leaders to a negotiating table during his day-long visit to Kabul and northern Afghanistan today. The visit marks the highest level of US engagement in Afghanistan since withdrawal of the former Soviet forces from the country in 1990, and Mr Richardson will be the most important American official to go to Kabul since Henry Kissinger's 1974 visit.

The US envoy is likely to back revived UN peace efforts by conveying Washington's concern over the continuing war, and to raise human rights issues — particularly relating to women — during his meeting with Mullah Rabbani, the Taliban Deputy President. The Taliban administration, in control of Kabul since 1996, has enforced the strict Islamic Sharia, closing girls' schools and banning Afghan women from working. Mr Richardson will later meet Burhanuddin Rabbani, Abdul Rashid Dostum and other leaders of the northern Afghan alliance locked in battle with Taliban forces.



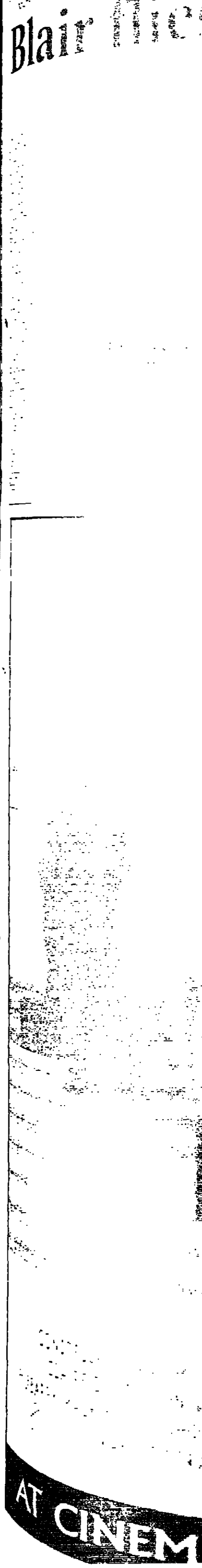
Australian police yesterday remove dock workers who had chained themselves to a railway line in Brisbane to prevent cargo trains reaching Patrick Stevedores, the container firm, which has sacked its entire 1,400 union labour workforce

London talks aim to heal rift in Karachi

BY MICHAEL BIVON DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

A NEW round of make-or-break talks was held in London yesterday between the Pakistan Government and the leader of the dissident immigrant organisation that has been engaged in a battle for control of Karachi.

Nawaz Sharif, Pakistan's Prime Minister, has sent Chaudhary Nisar Ali Khan to negotiate with Altaf Hussain, leader of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) which represents the Urdu speakers who migrated to Pakistan after the partition of India. The violent confrontation in Karachi has left hundreds dead and paralysed the city's economy. The MQM was opposed to the previous Government of Benazir Bhutto, which denounced Britain for allowing Mr Hussain to continue his activities from the London suburb of Mill Hill. The group has links with Pakistan's Muslim League. The MQM is demanding the abolition of no-go areas, the rehabilitation of some 425 people evicted from these areas, the release of MQM activists from prison and withdrawal of cases against them.



حکومت سے لڑنا



Arabs flee Galilee in the exodus of 1948 five months after Israel was created. Mr Blair is to visit a Palestinian refugee camp in Gaza

Blair flies on peace mission

BY CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM AND MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

ON THE eve of his arrival in Cairo today, Tony Blair issued a warning that the peace process was in dire trouble and urgently needed to be "kick-started".

His remarks to the Egyptian daily *Al-Ahram* have convinced Israeli and Palestinian officials that his high-profile Middle Eastern trip will build on his success in brokering the foundations of an Irish peace settlement.

They believe he will be arriving with specific new proposals to try to end the 13-month deadlock in peace negotiations triggered by Israel's move to start building the new settlement of Har Homa in annexed east Jerusalem.

Israeli officials are apparently worried by too superficial a comparison with the Ulster talks. The *Tel Aviv Haaretz* reported that to "illustrate the complexity of Israel's situation" briefings were being provided to Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister, to enable him

to point out the differences between the Northern Ireland and Middle East peace processes "amid expectations that Blair, or the media, will want to draw a comparison".

Added significance was given to the whistle-stop tour by yesterday's surprise decision by King Hussein of Jordan to visit Mr Netanyahu on his Passover holiday in neighbouring Eilat. Both leaders are due to hold private talks with Mr Blair in the next 72 hours.

However, Mr Blair will devote much of his time to

talks with Yassir Arafat and the Palestinian Authority in Gaza, having withdrawn from earlier plans to visit east Jerusalem. British officials said this was at the Palestinians' request.

Mr Blair will be shown some of the worst conditions in which Palestinians are living when he visits a refugee camp in Gaza. He will be told that, unless Britain and other Western nations increase their funding for the UN Relief and Works Agency caring for 3.5 million Palestinians, their health, education and living conditions will begin to deteri-

orate sharply as the money runs out. About 700,000 Palestinians fled in panic or were driven from their villages in the face of Jewish underground fighters taking up arms to establish a Jewish state.

Thousands, carrying possessions on their heads, fled from Galilee in 1948, hoping to return, but found themselves refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria or the rump of Palestine on the West Bank.

Mr Blair told his Egyptian interviewer that the European Union, of which Britain now holds the presidency, was

seeking a larger role in Middle East peacemaking, but one that was "complementary" to that of the US. Four days after Mr Blair arrives in Jerusalem he will be followed by Dennis Ross, the American special envoy, on yet another shuttle peace mission.

In words which may prove hard to realise in substance, Mr Blair — who will hold talks with President Mubarak of Egypt today before travelling on to Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian territories — told *Al-Ahram*: "We need to kick-start the process."

Western diplomats are sceptical of Europe's chances of upping its Middle East role from "payer to player" and note that Mr Blair sought to play down expectations by telling reporters before leaving: "We will obviously hope that we can play some role in bringing people together, recognising the limitations of our role and the difficulties that we will encounter."

Europe can help to break the deadlock



Robin Cook,
the Foreign
Secretary, on
his hopes for
the Middle East

This week saw three religions come together. Easter, Passover and Eid al-Adha coincided. The three religions — Christianity, Judaism and Islam — all spring from the same roots. And yet in the land holy to all three faiths, reconciliation appears to be in short supply.

The peace process in the Middle East is in deadlock. Hope and trust have been ebbing away, and there is a real fear that we may lose for good the momentum that seemed so filled with possibilities just a few years ago.

Tony Blair goes to the Middle East today. The primary purpose of his visit will be to inject momentum back into the negotiations. His mission will be aided by his own personal standing, and by the presidency of the European Union that he carries with him. Of course, he will not be expecting to return with an agreement. But his visit could help to restore some of the impetus that has been lacking in recent months. And it will emphasise the role that Europe can play.

The United States has taken the lead in brokering the talks, and has played its role with impressive commitment to peace. We want to make sure that Europe plays the most constructive role it can in supporting the American pressure for progress. The EU has spent more than twice as much as the US in aid to the Palestinians, with the specific intent of making the peace process viable.

We have encouraged the US to put proposals to the parties on the core issues. We keep in constant touch. The Prime Minister talks regularly to President Clinton, and I speak to Madeleine Albright. The stakes are too high for us to let narrow national advantage get in the way of our joint work for progress.

One of the most disturbing statistics about the peace process is that the average Palestinian income has fallen by a third since the Oslo accord was signed in 1993.

This has undermined progress. Poverty breeds extremism, and leaves little confidence among the Palestinians that the peace process is something that will ever benefit them. If peace is to have a chance, then all the people of the region must believe they have a stake in it. The European Union is working with the parties to make this happen.

The aid we are giving helps both sides — we are working with the Palestinians, for example, on improving their counter-terrorist capabilities. The equipment and training we are providing will help to ease the security concerns of Israeli people, as well as to help the Palestinians to keep their side of the agreements that they have struck with the Israeli Government. And during my own recent visit to the region, I agreed with Yassir Arafat that work should start on setting up a joint EU/Palestinian Security Committee. We are making sure that Europe's involvement has the best possible effect.

We have also been talking with the Israelis about easing the restrictions on the flow of people and goods. These restrictions have stifled the Palestinian economy. We want to open the key economic pressure points, each of which could give that economy a major boost. Opening the Gaza Airport would dramatically improve prospects for trade. Opening the Gaza Industrial Estate would create up to 35,000 jobs and allow the large-scale investment and development which has so far been lacking. Both

would be valuable spurs to a wider settlement. And the EU is willing to help to carry these and related issues forward. If the parties are serious about making progress, then Tony Blair's visit can be a catalyst for it.

The conflict in the Middle East has tended to polarise all who get involved. Either you support the Arabs or the Israelis. Your loyalty to one camp is measured by the vehemence with which you attack the other. But peace is anything but a zero-sum game. The truth is that conflict hurts all the peoples of the region. No one benefits — the Israelis continue to live under the shadow of terrorism; the Palestinians remain in the poverty and injustice that breeds extremism. If peace could break out, both communities would win. Those who work for peace work equally for both.

Tony Blair and I are friends of Israel, and friends of the peace process. When the Prime Minister visits the region he will speak openly and frankly, as a friend. He knows that, with political commitment and a willingness to take risks for peace, progress can be made over the most intractable issues. He goes to the Middle East only a week after he signed the Northern Ireland agreement at Stormont.

There are no miracle cures for the Middle East. The peacemaker there needs all the patience and stamina of the long-distance runner. The Prime Minister's visit will show that Britain and Europe have that patience and the commitment needed to help the parties to move forward again.

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Victims of malnutrition in southern Sudan return to their villages after collecting their first relief supplies since a food shortage struck the area a month ago (David Orr writes). The first reports of deaths have started to emerge in recent days. The situation is so bad that thousands of people have nothing to eat

but leaves, nuts and wild berries. "Things are very bad right now," said Brenda Barton, of the United Nations World Food Programme. "There are

large numbers of malnourished kids, with more emerging from the bush every day." Aid officials say the region, particularly southwestern Bahr el-Ghazal province, faces the worst food shortage for five years. About 350,000 people are believed to be at risk from starvation in the area, which has been

ravaged for 15 years by civil war with government forces from the north. Aid organisations flying in food are being hampered by a shortage of aircraft.

UN chief tells Africa to reform

Investigation team pulls out of Congo

UN chief tells Africa to reform



Annan: plea to liberalise economies

SCOLDING Africa to look beyond colonialism, the United Nations Secretary-General yesterday laid out a manifesto for democratisation and economic reform on the troubled continent. Kofi Annan, the first black African to head the world organisation, presented the report on Africa's ills requested by the UN Security Council as part of the effort by the United States to revamp international policy towards the continent. In his prescriptions, Mr Annan, an American-educated Ghanaian, implicitly aligned himself with the new generation of African leaders, led by President Museveni of Uganda, who argue that Africa must stop blaming its colonial past and solve its own problems. "Today more than ever, Africa must look at itself," he wrote. "The nature of political power in many African states, together with the real and perceived consequences of capturing and maintaining power, is a key source of conflict across the continent. It is frequently the case that

Kofi Annan's blueprint calls on the continent to solve its own problems.

James Bone reports from New York

political victory assumes a winner-takes-all form with respect to wealth and resources, patronage, and the prestige and prerogatives of office," he said. "Where there is insufficient accountability of leaders, lack of transparency in regimes, inadequate checks and balances, non-adherence to the rule of law, absence of peaceful means to change or replace leadership, or lack of respect for human rights, political control becomes excessively important, and the stakes become dangerously high," the UN chief said. Mr Annan's recommendations will no doubt please American policymakers seeking to follow up President Clinton's recent tour of the continent with a new drive to promote democracy and free markets in Africa. In what is likely to be one of his

most controversial proposals, the UN chief accused many African states of being too ready to resort to military force, and called on them to cap their military spending at 1.5 per cent of gross domestic product and to commit themselves to zero growth in their defence budgets for ten years. He also urged African countries to abandon the command economy and embrace economic liberalisation. "The Secretary-General counselled them "without delay" to deregulate their economies and to privatise state-owned industries and to seek integration with the world economy, relying on the private sector as the engine of growth. "Despite the broad consensus on how development and economic growth should be pursued, in Africa it has been

difficult to achieve rapid progress, partly because of the failed policies pursued in the past by many African countries and the difficult international economic environment." Mr Annan emphasised the need for "good governance" — a new United Nations buzz-word — and said that the continent's governments should stamp out corruption and show respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law. UN officials underlined the uncharacteristic candour of the report, but it still failed to single out for criticism particular African countries, such as the military rulers of Nigeria. Mr Annan emphasised that the rest of the world must also do its part to revive the struggling continent by reducing its foreign debt, restructuring development aid and allowing market access for African goods. He proposed that the Security Council should hold further ministerial sessions on Africa every six months, culminating in a heads-of-state summit meeting in five years' time.

Investigation team pulls out of Congo

BY JAMES BONE

THE United Nations is to abandon its field investigation of the suspected massacres of Rwandan refugees in the former Zaire because of obstruction by the new leaders of the renamed Democratic Republic of Congo. UN officials say the team of 25 human rights workers is to be withdrawn from Congo after months of unsuccessful attempts to get their work done. The investigation was suspended last week when a Canadian investigator was detained overnight and his papers photocopied, arousing fears that the Government would harass witnesses identified by the UN. Diplomats say one witness has been killed. The UN team was investigating the fate of tens of thousands of Rwandan Hutu refugees thought to have been butchered as the

forces of Laurent Kabila, now President, swept to power last year, supported by the Tutsi-led army. Aid donors had seen President Kabila's willingness to co-operate with the investigation as a key gauge of whether they could work with his Government. But President Kabila does not trust the UN because of its earlier intervention to suppress a secessionist movement in the newly independent Congo in the 1960s. Rwanda's military also put pressure on him to block the UN inquiry. The investigation would be completed outside the country by Roberto Garretón, a Chilean human rights lawyer who was dropped as the leader of the UN team for speaking out last year about the existence of dozens of suspected mass graves.

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7 1998

France pledges to tackle sleaze in rebellious Corsica

FROM ADAM SAGE IN PARIS

ELISABETH GUIGOU, the French Justice Minister, yesterday pledged to crack down on the sleaze and waste that mark public life in Corsica.

Her comments confirmed a radical change of policy by French authorities, who have tried to contain Corsican nationalism by spending Fr7 billion (£700 million) a year on the island's 250,000 inhabitants. The attempt to buy off the terrorists and prevent Corsica from turning into a French Northern Ireland has failed, Paris now admits. It has merely served to fuel corruption and organised crime.

"We must stop the complacency that has installed itself over the years," Mme Guigou said, adding that detectives who specialised in fraud inquiries would be sent to the "Island of Beauty". She said: "If civil servants have broken the law, they will be prosecuted." This would be something

of a revolution on an island where the State's representatives have never bothered to check on the destination of taxpayers' money. The result of such lax control was yesterday described as "extremely surprising, even stupefying" by Jean Glavany, the head of a parliamentary commission set up to investigate public expenditure in Corsica.

The commission's report, due later this year, will detail the failure to supervise vast state-funded projects, many of which never got off the ground.

M Glavany admitted yesterday that Parisian politicians had ordered "non-reimbursable" loans to help to restore calm to a violent society.

On Tuesday, the French Interior Minister replaced three high-ranking civil servants on Corsica in an attempt to "underline the efficiency of the State's action". The move followed the assassination in

February of Claude Erignac, the Corsican Prefect, a crime that persuaded Paris to alter its approach.

Until recently, officials in Paris claimed that their generous and flexible approach contrasted favourably with London's stance over Northern Ireland. The Corsican nationalist movement is divided and its influence nowhere near as strong as that of the IRA, they say. But organised crime syndicates, some linked to the Italian Mafia, have flourished. M Erignac's successor, Bernard Bonnet, who has himself received death threats, promised yesterday to put an end to the "practices of organised crime".

But he is likely to encounter hostility in a society grown accustomed to the state aid that has encouraged corruption. Corsicans derive more than half their annual average incomes — Fr103,500 (£10,350) — from welfare payments.



Paris now believes trying to "buy off" Corsican separatist guerrillas has failed

Iran's leader urges unity as moderates fête freed mayor

FROM MICHAEL THEODOULOU IN NICOSIA

IRAN'S supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, yesterday called for unity, a day after he ordered the release from prison of the popular Mayor of Tehran and so helped to defuse the country's worst political crisis in years.

Gholamhossein Karbaschi's 11-day detention on corruption charges had brought into the open a bitter power struggle between the regime's moderate and hardline factions which spilled on to the streets earlier this week.

After freeing the mayor on bail, Ayatollah Khamenei told Iranians to support both the Government and the hardline judiciary which had ordered his April 4 arrest.

Mr Karbaschi, who denies corruption, is a key ally of the moderate President Khatami and his release signalled a turning point in the Islamic revolution that began 19 years ago, analysts said. "It showed that, when the chips are down, the supreme leader will back the reformist Government rather than the hardliners," a diplomat said. Unelected but all-powerful.

Ayatollah Khamenei is considered Mr Khatami's leading rival, but his action was prompted by apparent dismay at the popular backlash in which thousands of Mr Karbaschi's supporters clashed with hardliners. Celebrations continued yesterday, the mayor being showered with flowers and cheered by hundreds of well-wishers.

His popularity after nine years in the job stems from more than his achievements in transforming the overcrowded capital into a pleasant city full of parks and recreation centres. "The people are jubilant because his release was one in the eye for the hardliners," a European diplomat said.

Mr Karbaschi played a decisive role in securing Mr Khatami's unexpected landslide victory in last year's presidential elections. By toppling him, hardliners had hoped to weaken the President, supporters said.

Moderates now hope the President will be able to accelerate the pace of his planned reforms.

WORLD IN BRIEF

MEPs reject ban on tobacco adverts

Brussels: The European Union's effort to ban cigarette advertising and sponsorship hit a new hurdle yesterday when a committee of the European Parliament rejected the proposed law on legal grounds (Charles Bremner writes). The decision of the Legal Committee, reached by 12 votes to seven, was hailed by the tobacco industry as proof that the long-disputed ban breached the Maastricht treaty.

The MEPs backed the view that the treaty's single-market laws did not offer a basis for a measure that was aimed at harmonising national laws to protect public health. The committee's opinion is advisory, but it hands ammunition to opponents of the ban as it comes up for the required approval of the full Parliament in Strasbourg this spring.

Gunmen kill Russian general

Moscow: A Russian general and three other officers were killed when gunmen attacked a military convoy in the Caucasus region of North Ossetia, close to the breakaway republic of Chechnya. Seven soldiers were wounded in the attack, one of the most serious outbreaks of violence in the volatile region since the 1994-96 Chechen war (Robin Lodge writes). President Maskhadov of Chechnya immediately condemned the attack and offered his government's assistance in identifying and detaining the perpetrators, believed by the Russian authorities to be renegade Chechen fighters.

Actor's killer convicted



Los Angeles: Tak Tan, a member of a street gang, was found guilty of murdering the actor Haing Ngor, left, who survived the killing fields of Cambodia only to die during a robbery outside his home here in February 1996. Ngor, 55, a former gynaecologist who won an Academy Award for his supporting role in the 1984 film *The Killing Fields*, fled Cambodia in 1980 and settled in Los Angeles' Chinatown, where he devoted his time to helping his fellow Cambodians. (Reuters)

George Michael charged

Beverly Hills: The singer George Michael, arrested last week in a lavatory at a Beverly Hills park, has been formally charged with lewd conduct. Mr Michael was ordered to appear in court on May 5, but he can be represented by an attorney and is not required to attend personally. He was charged with a single misdemeanour that carries a maximum six months in jail and £600 fine, Deputy District Attorney Ellen Aragon said. (AP)

Serb couple shot by Croats

Belgrade: An elderly Serb couple were beaten and shot dead in western Bosnia in an attack by Croats, described by the United Nations as one of the worst incidents since the Dayton peace accord (Tom Walker writes). The victims were former refugees who had recently returned to their house outside Drvar, where a mainly Serb population of 20,000 was displaced by 7,000 Croats in the war. The bodies were found in the couple's burning home.

Party chooses military ruler

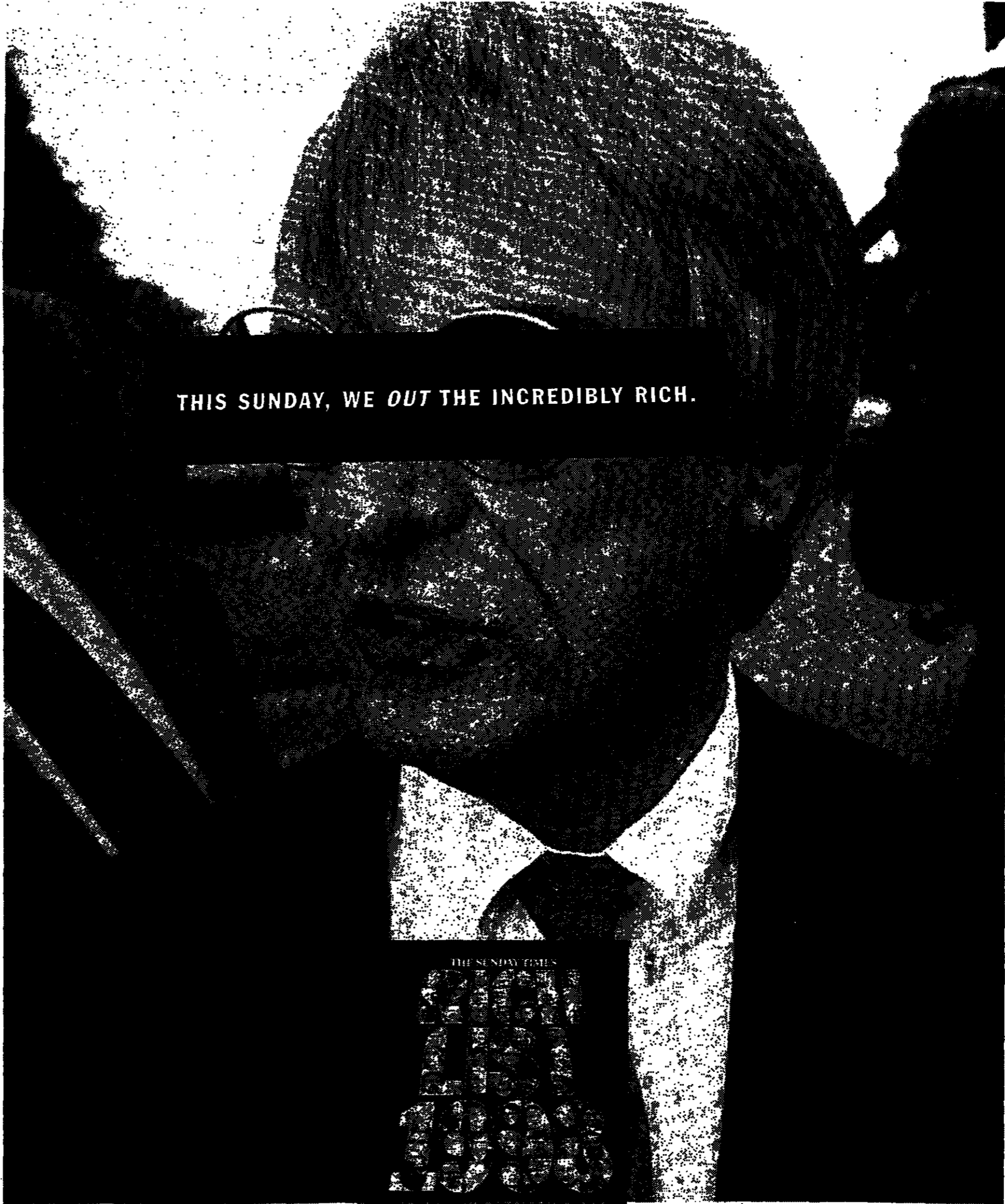
Kaduna: The United Nigeria Congress Party, the country's dominant party, adopted General Sani Abacha, right, the military ruler, as its candidate for August presidential elections. The party took more than 65 per cent of seats in the last national elections, in December for state assemblies, and is one of four out of five registered parties that proposed the idea of General Abacha, 54, standing as a consensus candidate. He has yet to say whether he will run for the presidency. (Reuters)



Officer takes himself hostage

Soweto: After being sentenced to three years in prison for corruption, a policeman held himself hostage by putting a gun in his mouth, walking out of the courtroom and hailing a taxi. M. P. Tladi had been convicted of taking the equivalent of £75 from a man who was being held for marijuana possession. Tladi was arrested for pointing a gun at an officer during his flight from court and was admitted to a clinic. (AP)

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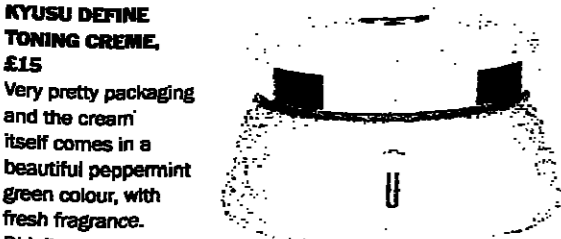
Short, sharp chic circa 1954: "Cropped pants have a hint of the farouche that is wonderfully sexy — think of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn in their frayed denim cut-offs"

SIX OF THE BEST

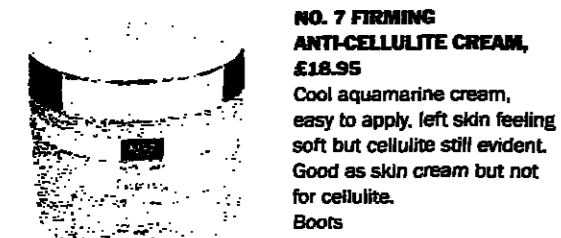
Firm those thighs and bottoms with the help of a good diet, exercise and our six of the best toning creams



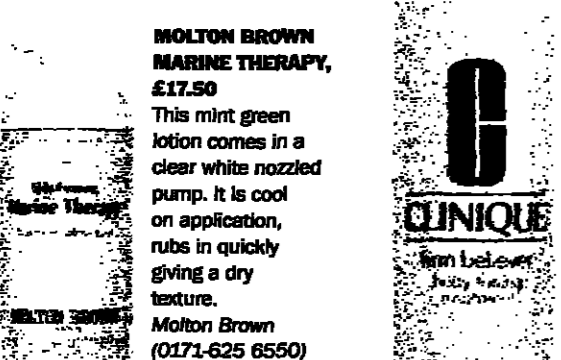
DECLÉOR CONTOURING CREAM, £21.50
Smelt beautiful, left thighs feeling smooth and stimulated and skin soft. This effect was pleasing but doubtful if it had any long-term impact on cellulite.
For stockists telephone 0171-262 0403
7/10



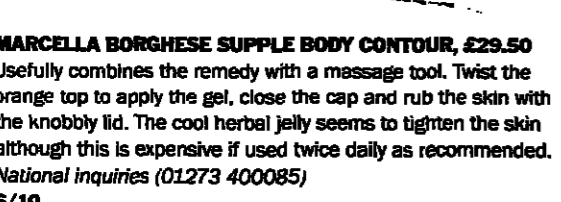
KYUSU DEFINE TONING CREAM, £15
Very pretty packaging and the cream itself comes in a beautiful peppermint green colour, with fresh fragrance. Didn't see a great deal of difference in cellulite areas, although it did leave skin feeling soft and supple.
Boots (0845 0708090)
6/10



CLINIQUE FIRM BELIEVER, £24
Easy to use, massage neither required nor encouraged. Takes a matter of seconds, twice a day. The theory is that the liquid will improve the skin's elasticity and so eradicate the orange-peel effect. Did have an effect but nothing can shift larger lumps of fat.
Leading department stores
8/10



MOLTON BROWN MARINE THERAPY, £17.50
This mint green lotion comes in a clear white nozzle pump. It is cool on application, rubs in quickly giving a dry texture.
Molton Brown (0171-625 6550)
6/10



MARCELLA BORGHESE SUPPLE BODY CONTOUR, £29.50
Usefully combines the remedy with a massage tool. Twist the orange top to apply the gel, close the cap and rub the skin with the knobby lid. The cool herbal jelly seems to tighten the skin although this is expensive if used twice daily as recommended.
National Inquiries (01273 400085)
6/10

COMPILED BY DEBORAH BRETT

Here is a pair of trousers. Quite a nice pair of trousers, but not the sort to cause one's heart to miss a beat. They are the kind of trousers you can take or leave. Here is a pair of shears. Let us crop the trouser legs. Snip! to 2in above the ankle. Snip! to mid-calf. Snip! to just below the crook of the knee. Three bold cuts and, hey presto! something to get excited about, for cropped trousers — Capri pants, pedal-pushers, clamdiggers — are one of the summer's hottest looks.

Yves Saint Laurent's inspiration of putting women into men's tailoring notwithstanding, girls and masculine trousering are rarely a successful combination. Men's trousers look good on men because they flatter the male body. They make no allowance for the subtle curves of the female lower half.

The solution is to find a shape that is cut with girls in



mind. This is where Capri pants and their cousins come in, cut to flatter the curves of hip and calf, cropped to expose a pretty anklebone. There is something very fetching about cropping a garment just above a fragile joint — ankle or wrist. The effect is to make one look charmingly vulnerable, no matter how tough — denim, leather — the fabric of the garment in question.

Cropped pants also have a hint of the farouche that is wonderfully sexy — think of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn in their frayed denim cut-offs, or Robinson Crusoe in brilliantly avant-garde goatskin clamdiggers (there is a refined version at Amanda Wakeley, whose caramel leather pedal-pushers cost £619).

In grander fabrics — silk, satin — the look becomes more glamorous but equally ambiguous — a matador's suit of lights, perhaps, or an operatic girl-dressed-as-boy. At Dior, Galliano showed an exquisite moonlight-white brocade pair of flower-embroidered knee britches and matching frock coat. Yves Saint Laurent had an inspired combination of primrose matador pants under an orange-tawny wrap-T-shirt, while Versace deconstructed a masculine suit in Prince of Wales check, with a slashed and frayed jacket over narrow trousers cropped to just below the kneecap.

Given that this is such a wearable look, not to mention more suited to the exigencies of daily life and the vagaries of the British weather than the alternative big season's look — the fantasy milkmaid, the flower-sown Ophelia — you would think the high street would have fallen on it with enthusiasm. Think again. At designer levels, there is plenty of choice. Paul Smith's women's collection has flame-pink pedal-pushers. £90. Rifat

Obek does wildly patterned, low-waisted, pointy-hemmed clamdiggers at £35; and Georges Rech Boutique has blue cotton trousers with a snappily detailed sailor's button-flap front. But a trawl through the big chains shows that, for less than £50, you can have clamdiggers in any colour you like, so long as it is denim or white. The latter is problematic in any case, because of the show-through that reveals seams, pockets, your knickers and other bits of scaffolding over which you would prefer to draw a decent veil. At Karen Millen, white or navy pedal-pushers, at £89.95, are rather pricey, but good quality, and would look exotic with a beaded crochet camisole. £49.95. Morgan has white clamdiggers with a cuff detail. £37.99 — pretty with a slight tan and Principles' silver crocheted camisole. £25, or Top Shop's groovy denim halter neck, £20.

If this blue and white is very crisp and nautical, no doubt. But what if one longs for something a bit wilder at heart? Marks & Spencer — not possibly, what one would think of as the natural habitat of the wild at heart — has stretch cotton twill cigarette-leg cropped pants in white, black, tobacco, beige, sage and best, a pretty lilac, which might be one of M&S's skinny-rib silk vests in primrose, orange, fuchsia or lilac.

Next has ice-blue cotton satin clamdiggers for an amazing £24.99. Warehouse has stretch cotton satin pedal-pushers in black or fuchsia. £35 — in the shops from next weekend. From July it is bringing in tailored grey wool cropped pants and matching jacket — perfect with last season's boned grey flannel bustier.

But if, like me, you yearn for pedal-pushers in pale pink, ice blue, pistachio shantung or shot brocade, you will just have to nerve yourself for a spot of DIY. Vogue's Elements pattern 9616, or Basic Design 1948, look possible, even for those of us who used to be sent back in needlework to do it all over again.

HOT TIP

A way to cut down on make-up clutter when your evening bag is simply too small is with Vincent Longo's lambswool paddlebrush. Rub the wool in your blusher and apply, then simply stick in your bag. The lambswool holds the pigment, by rubbing it on your cheeks to reapply there is no need for the blusher or the big brush. Vincent Longo paddlebrush, £12, available from Selfridges. Mail order: 01252 741 601.

Objects of desire

- For a sleek, sophisticated look, scrape your hair back in a chignon and hold in place with this delicate beaded hibiscus flower hairpin by Alexandre de Paris. Hugely expensive at £169.95, it is available from Harrods (0171-730 1234).
- Last season Miu Miu, Prada's diffusion range, brought out a pink, sequined version of the Dorothy, Wizard of Oz, shoe, with matching bag. The look has finally trickled down to the high street with Kookai having done the most brilliant version, a snip at £19.99. Kookai, 123 Kensington High Street, London W8 (0171-937 4411).

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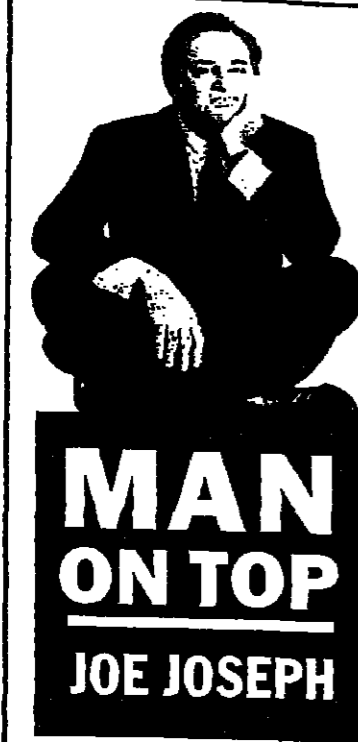
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MAN ON TOP JOE JOSEPH

So I'm rude? Keep your fat nose out of it

All you half-witted imbeciles who have nothing better to do with your pathetic lives than pick your toes and read this column know that I have little time for people who are needlessly offensive to complete strangers. I only bring up the subject now because London risks turning its back on a once-in-a-lifetime commercial opportunity if it doesn't move fast to capitalise on the opening being left by New York. To put it bluntly, the time has come for Londoners to become ruder. Yes, that DOES include you, you feathery.

You see, New York, New York (so good they named it twice, but apparently still not precisely enough to stop those taxi drivers newly arrived from Azerbaijan from getting lost every time they pick you up at JFK) has got it into its head that it should be more polite. Rudolph Giuliani, the city's Mayor, has just asked New York-

ers to be nicer to one another. It's the sort of bold initiative that leads social historians who have studied the intimate relationship between the growth of courtesy in Western society and the rise of the State over the past few centuries to ask one obvious key question: has Rudolph Giuliani lost his marbles?

Plain-speaking is what made America great. Mark Twain left us in no doubt that Huck Finn, who had no time for superficial politeness and skin-deep good manners because he thought them hypocritical, was the one who held the moral high ground. If it wasn't for the power of our unceasing rudeness, Dan Quayle might still be frighteningly active in American politics. Rudeness is what has made New York one of the few truly vibrant, fashionable places in the world where everyone, regardless of how poor or lowly born, can grow up with

exactly the same opportunity as every other American of being shot by a deranged stranger on their way to a movie. Strip away the rudeness and the city will come unstuck, just as tinkering with a perfectly functioning radio by cleaning out the grille, which seals its insides, is guaranteed to make that radio keel over and die.

But if New York is dumb enough to throw away such a lucrative asset, London should step in. Candidates for London's mayoral race should pledge to do all they can to steal New York's clothes by increasing the level of rudeness in London if they are made mayor. One sensible way of meeting manifesto promises to increase discourtesy in the capital would be by organising competitions that would keep all Londoners in, as it were, rude health. Those who have London's best interests at heart have already mapped out some preliminary

tests to sift out those Londoners who remain so polite to make the grade.

Hotel doormen: will be tested by handing them only one pound for the effort of opening the door of a taxi that was waiting there anyway. Marks awarded for accepting the solitary coin in a manner which suggests it might be a fresh urine sample. Extra points for saying within other guests' earshot: "She provides all the usual services, Sir, including the one you mentioned. Remember - top bell, name's Susie."

Maitre d's: will be watched to find who can tut-tut the most dramatically as they scan their reservations list when a couple arrive for dinner without having booked. Extra marks if restaurant is empty. Bonus points if the maitre d' still persuades them to accept the worst table in the room.

Hairdressers: will be judged on how well they cope with a customer's request for the Gwyneth Paltrow cut. If a customer, seeing the result in the mirror, waits: "This is not how Gwyneth Paltrow has her hair cut!", then points are awarded to the hairdresser who replies: "It would be if she came to this salon!"

Walters: will be expected to correct a diner's pronunciation of bruschetta in a voice loud enough to make diners on neighbouring tables snigger superciliously, but not loud enough for him to be sacked.

Tube passengers: must ensure that they board a train in such a way as to make it impossible for those wishing to exit at that station to get off the train. Extra points if this is achieved outside rush hour.

Literary critics: score points by reviewing a friend's novel in a way that makes it clear to every-

body, except the author's vanity-blinded ego, that he hated it. Additional points if textual composition makes it impossible for the publisher to fill out even the shallowest compliment for use on the paperback.

Estate agents: are awarded marks for taking you to the most houses you DON'T want to see and for not taking you to the most houses that you DO want to see. Extra points if the agent makes a 9am appointment to show a house you DO want to see, but fails to turn up. Double bonus points if, when you call him later, he tells you it was such a peach that it was sold on the spot to the first person who saw it at 10am.

This is obviously a very preliminary list. So if you have further suggestions, you will be doing London a big favour if you just mind your own business and keep your fat nose out of it for a change!

'I have no regrets'

It's hard not to like Drew Barrymore. Even when she is in a slightly ratty mood, sparked by what she describes as an "eyelash crisis", the sheer force of her personality is enough to conquer anyone.

She does not so much speak as gush huge, mangled sentences that roll on and on. But then, she has more to talk about than most. Her role in *E.T.*, at the age of seven, made her America's sweetheart but, several years on, Barrymore became the world's most famous teenage drug and alcohol casualty. Then there is the fact that she is the product of an acting dynasty that stretches back to the 19th century, but is so idiosyncratic in her views and opinions that she at times comes across as ridiculous.

All of which skirts around the fact that Barrymore, 22, has spent the past few years transforming herself into one of the more accomplished actresses in Hollywood. She has done it quietly, and just when people feel they can characterise her as someone who plays only bad girls, she confounds them by popping up as a New York deb in Woody Allen's *Everyone Says I Love You*, or by playing a sweet-natured suburban teenager in her latest film, *The Wedding Singer*.

A romantic comedy set in the mid-1980s, when men had silly haircuts and everyone listened to Duran Duran and Culture Club, it sees Barrymore playing the archetypal girl next door. As she sits opposite me - her nails painted the same colour as her short black skirt, big butterfly ring on her left hand and dark roots showing through her blonde hair - I suggest it is not a role she is familiar with. "Yeah, and that's the fun thing. That's why I went and

At the age of eight she was drinking, at nine clubbing and by 13 in rehab. Divorced, and still only 22, Drew Barrymore is finally happy. Interview by David Eimer

did some bad-girl roles for a while, then that ended up deeming me a bit of a bad girl, but the truth is that I always want to do in film what I don't do in real life. So I am not going to get pregnant very soon, I doubt, and I am not going to get married, but in films I've got to do both," she says, without taking a breath.

Barrymore has already been married in real life - in 1994 to Jeremy Thomas, an LA bar owner from Newport, South Wales - but the marriage lasted only weeks. She has said she married Thomas just so he could get a green card, and once referred to him as having 666, the mark of the beast, tattooed on his neck. The effect the relationship had on Barrymore is clear from her thoughts on marriage. "It has not evolved as life has. We live in a really different world.

"Marriage puts a lot of pressure on people - it makes them go nutty. It's like this one ceremonial day, then you live with that person for ever."

Still, Barrymore now claims never to have been happier in her personal life. She has been with the actor Luke Wilson since meeting him on the set of the yet-to-be-released *Home Fries* in 1996.

"I'm massively in love, everything is cool. We don't

live together but it's exciting when we see each other. I'm as excited when I see him now as I was on our first date. Organic helps; you know, see where things go naturally.

That is not to say that she does not work hard at it. "I'm like, 'Listen couples'. They should go to therapy, and spend at least a couple of moments, if not hours, working on their relationship, then



In *E.T.*, aged 7: innocent, but not for long

lot and I can apply those lessons to this relationship," she says. "I never had love at first sight before, so I didn't know if I believed in it. I had to be clubbed over the head, 'You love me, don't you see that?' And I was, like, 'I guess I do'. I'm sorry it took me so long to figure it out."

This is all a long way from the Drew Barrymore who first charmed audiences in *E.T.* in 1982. She might have looked as if butter would not melt in her mouth, but within a year she was drinking, and by the age of nine she and her mother, Jaid, were regulars at New York clubs such as Studio 54. She moved on to pot, then cocaine. At 13 she went into rehab, and it seemed she would become just another footnote in Hollywood history. "I did a little drugs and drink, everybody does," she says matter-of-factly. "I'd much rather see a kid experiment - an adult should know better. The kid is going to get through it and move on."

If she seems flippant about the experience, it is because she thinks it was a necessary part of growing up. "I'm glad every moment took place because I'm happy now," she says. "When you're a kid your job in life is to try to figure out what kind of person you want to be. I know exactly who I want to be and try to be that person every day."

Barrymore emerged from rehab determined to resurrect her career. She began with her bad-girl phase, in such films as 1992's *Poison Ivy*. She also flashed her breasts at the chat show host David Letterman, and posed for *Playboy*.

part from showing how many tattoos she has (six), the pictures offered an insight into her relationship with her mother. Soon after, Jaid also posed for *Playboy*, then published a book, *Secrets of World-Class Lovers*, seemingly in a bid at one-upmanship. Their relationship has not been easy since Barrymore left rehab: for long periods they do not talk to each other.

It is a similar story with her father, John Jr, a one-time actor whose career stalled after a drugs bust. For a long time he was homeless and never in touch with his daughter; now they see each other occasionally.

Outside of acting, Drew Barrymore is chairwoman of the Wildlife Waystation, a reserve for animals left homeless when zoos close down, and the Female Health Foundation. Midway through the interview she brandishes a new charity lipstick, produced with a cutting-edge cosmetics company, Urban Decay.

"This is a lipstick I'm really proud of. Every single dime



David Eimer. This is an edited version of an article in the May issue of Marie Claire.

from this lipstick is going to go to charity," she says. "If you don't use your platform to do something important in life, then I think you're doing only half of what you could be doing."

She also has her own production company, Flower Films. A current project is the controversial *All She Wanted*, the true story of a Midwestern woman who lived as a man and had numerous affairs with local women until she was discovered, raped and killed. Barrymore has long had an interest in androgyny and at one time considered herself to be bisexual.

"I like people who can be you, know, androgynous. We've only got two sexes, so we should learn to relate to them." She plans to produce and star in *All She Wanted* later this year.

With the title role in a new version of *Cinderella* also completed, she is firmly entrenched in the mainstream, and happy to stay there. "I'd like to be poetic and say 'I feel like my life is like an ocean and it's always had soft currents, and waves at times'. That's how I'd like my career to go for the rest of my life. I hope I'll just continue to be employed. That's what I want." And what Drew wants, she seems to get.



Drew redrawn: "I know exactly who I want to be and try to be that person every day"

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THE SUNDAY TIMES

FIT FOR A COMEBACK

Calvin Klein is relaunching his original designer jeans. He tells Style why tight is right

THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

Accustomed as he was to...

Peter Stothard on the man who put passion into public speaking

For two thousand years the speech-writer has been an unfashionable necessity for those in public life. Sir Ronald Millar, who died yesterday, was the most influential political speech-writer of his time. He wrote powerful words for three Prime Ministers and particularly famous phrases for Margaret Thatcher. But he was more than the man who put words into Mrs Thatcher's mouth. Others did that too. He was a man with rare understanding of what speech-writing could really be and why its enemies distrusted it so much.

Ronnie was a classicist in his youth, not a keen scholar but a keen student. The problem, he once told me over a dinner at Brown's Hotel, was Plato. "The idea that anyone who writes a speech for someone else is a deceiving dog, a dissimulator and fraud is Plato's — and it has dominated the minds of intellectuals ever since. Rulers have almost always needed writers to shape their thoughts. But, because of that old Greek, they have rarely liked to admit it."

The man who persuaded Mrs Thatcher to say "U-turn if you want to. The Lady is not for turning" was the heir to a different tradition that is stronger in the realms of action than of thought. He was suspicious of those who claimed to know the truth: idealists were on the Left and had too long a record of imposing truths by lies.

He was concerned instead to encourage what was good and to put his art at the service of what was good. Plato, and his followers in Europe's ivory towers, believed that rhetoric obscured the truth and that professional rhetoricians were unscrupulous "sophists" writing for illiterate office-seekers and legacy-hunters. Ronnie saw rhetoric as liberating the best ideas from the minds in which they were hidden. He preferred the legacy of another slightly later "old Greek", Isocrates, who thought that speech-writers could and should advance the causes in which others believed.

The moral question for Ronnie lay firmly in whether the cause was a good one, not in the rhetorical means chosen to advance it. He was not a man who wore his philosophy like a politician's rossette. He liked reticence and distance from the fray. But he was a man of powerful and subtle political mind. After his youth in the theatre, he spent his later life in opposition to real enemies, striking miners, Falklands faint-hearts and the Tory "wets" who wanted the U-turn in 1980. Theatre was his method. But he based his own confidence and the confidence that he induced in others on the great European camp of Isocrates, Cicero and Petrarch whom he did not like to remember learning about at Charterhouse and Cambridge, but whose lessons remained with him throughout his life.

When I met him first in 1980, he was little known outside the theatre. He had written some speeches for Ted Heath; but, as he said, nobody ever gained much for doing that and Ronnie was not at all certain that his then master

wanted to encourage the good at all. As a young *Sunday Times* reporter I had telephoned him without warning on his birthday, wished him many happy returns and asked for an interview. Perhaps he had enjoyed a glass or two of champagne. Whatever the reason, he asked me directly over to his piano-dominated flat and gave me what has since become the familiar account of his impetuous-and-actress relationship with Margaret Thatcher.

I wondered at the time if she might disavow his claims. But she never did. Ronnie did not advertise his sophistic skills and he was the most discreet of confidants. But he was not ashamed of his skills either. He set out to me how he chose the various suitable tricks, or tropes as the old rhetoricians would say, and applied them to the ideas in the Thatcher mind. He was somewhat surprised to find later that the copyright in the speeches was wholly Thatcher's own.

He found literary allusions particularly useful, pillaging not only Christopher Fry's phrase "The lady's not for burning" for the 1980 Brighton conference speech, but Shakespeare too: in the aftermath of Labour's Winter of Discontent, Mrs Thatcher promised "an autumn of understanding and a winter of common sense". It could have rung false and heavy. But it did not. Ronnie knew that it would not. He was her producer as well as her writer — and sometimes her booster too. If the words were not enough, other theatrical tricks were tried. Even after the all-night writing sessions, he would be awake at the back of the hall, leading and prodding the audience into laughter or applause, particularly if his star were to fluff his lines, as she frequently did.

He despaired of the contempt for language felt by so many politicians. He knew that the way to persuasion lay partly through reason — and he was both praising and grateful when an early draft of a Thatcher speech contained a well-directed argument or a telling line of statistics. But he was also aware of the suspension of reason that was necessary if the Prime Minister were to communicate fully to her audience. There were few politicians, he said, who controlled both the language of passion and reason. Most controlled neither. The glory of Margaret Thatcher was that she recognised the importance of something that she could not do herself. She listened. She learnt. He drew out of his mind thoughts that were half-formed in hers — and he did the same for John Major.

It remains fashionable to decry the role of speech-writers and spin-doctors. But unless a politician has the confidence to communicate an idea, the idea will often die from fear. Ronnie could have written speeches for anyone. He was a professional sophist who could have well earned his living in 4th-century Athens. But his great contributions were the words in which he believed.



Surfing a political wave

Blair is on a roll right now — but one slip and the surfer-politician could find himself washed up on the beach

That surfing is the showiest of sports does not make it the less estimable. The art is spellbinding and the qualities needed are fine. To be a great surfer you need nerve, intelligence and speed.

You may hope for a little luck, too. You need the right sea, the right waves breaking where and when it suits you. But in the end it is skill that keeps you up there, riding the wave: skill — and a bit of luck.

I think that some kinds of political leadership are rather like surfing. Luck, confidence, momentum and that element of *performance* are so important. Everything depends on a critical interplay of movement and balance. The mastery is real yet, in the end, the surfer-politician is not that master: he is the plaything of big forces which he has learnt to ride, cannot alter and dare not cross. He chooses his wave then uses it, as ostentatiously as he can.

Though poise is vital, a surfing performance is dynamic. Stop, and you sink. Hit a rock, and there's no recovery. To stay up there, a surfer needs to keep moving — fast. Lose velocity, and you lose equilibrium. Lose equilibrium and you lose control. Lose control and you lose the crowd. At times it is a sprint, at times almost a dance, for this is a sport in which showing off is part of the action. Vanity is not a pitfall, not a distraction: it is a prerequisite. Cease to be flashy and you cease to be good. Lose speed, lose shine, and you lose the plot.

Margaret Thatcher was not a surfer-politician. More a cross-channel swimmer — more marathoneer than acrobat — she undeniably needed luck and judgment too; she had to know the sea and the tides, and she liked to impress. But what carried her, what *drove* her through? Consider her time as Opposition leader: she had a little more than three years: Tony Blair a little less. Where he dazzled from the start, she disappointed. She was dogged, she clung grimly to the argument, but she hardly shone. Set-piece occasions did not serve her well. The most we could say as she entered Downing Street in 1979 was that she knew where she was going and stuck to her guns. She had stamina and direction: she had no style. She was riding no wave.

It was the opposite with Mr Blair. He began to hypnotise even before he became Opposition leader. I remember his glittering acceptance speech

when he won: he had, already, "hit the ground running". From that day hardly a month passed without some new display. There was Clause Four, there was an array of headlines about breaking links with the unions, there was *The Road to the Manifesto*. To remark that, in retrospect, it was Neil Kinnock and John Smith who had put in much of the groundwork, and that Mr Blair travelled less distance in Opposition than at the time it seemed, is not to disparage his skill, but to demonstrate it: by constructing a crescendo of news events out of moves which looked braver than they

things, planning things. While you're on that roll you might even get this country into a single European currency — if you want to, have the nerve, and act fast.

Being on a roll isn't just an optical illusion. Napoleon was at least an illusionist, but more. Disraeli (or Lloyd George) knew that success brings approval and approval lends mastery and mastery brings success, and that — never mind whose plaudits you've stolen — while you've caught that wave you must ride it hard, show off mightily, and use the temporary predominance this brings to do all you can, fast. A web may be the product of much spinning but, once spun, will bear weight for a time.

Matthew Parris

You'd better not look down! Or you might not keep on flying, sings B B King in the song of the same name: *You'd better not hit the ground / Or you might just end up crying*. No more than this column is that song meant sceptically. A poet would say the song celebrates both the fragility and the power of flight. The aerodynamics engineer would say it indicates the uplift created by forward movement through air. Both would agree that when you're on a roll, you're on a roll.

Tony Blair is on a roll. To say that he is flying is to say more than that he's better not look down or he might just end up crying — though it is to say that too. To say that he is surfing is to say more than that, finally, all waves bring you on to the beach — though that is true. But while you're flying, while you're surfing, while you're on a roll, you can achieve things.

You can exert control of interest rates without anyone mood-nodding. You can fly above — surf past — the screams of manufacturing exporters, ignore the grumbles of farmers, skip right over the protests of teachers, pensioners, single mothers — and hurtle on, doing things, changing

Tory, a bit of the thrill of the roll he's on. As a Tory I have a nagging sense of a certain hollowiness to it all; but as a realist I concede that looking like a winner, even if you cheated a bit at first, helps you to keep winning. And, as a surfing spectator, I simply enjoy the wizardry. The surfer-politician can turn his trophies to solid account, if he's quick.

But in the back of my mind is Chapter Two of the Thatcher story we began. In Opposition, a few paragraphs back, Mrs Thatcher did not hit that wave, even with victory in 1979. Everything seemed to go wrong. Month after month the papers were full of the unemployment figures, the "North-South divide" and the destruction of British manufacturing. There were marches, a deeply unpopular Budget, and no sense at all of being on a Thatcher roll.

But she kept swimming. Never for a second did we doubt that she had a map, a destination, and the determination to go there. This kept most of us, even sceptics like me, beside. It kept much of the media impressed if not convinced. It persuaded undecided voters to suspend judgment. She had weight. Hers and Keith Joseph's ideas had weight. And it was not a matter of spirit, of technique, of building on optimism or the aura of success. She was not flying, she had never left the ground, she was no surfer, and she seemed to be swimming all against the waves.

We should not judge Tony Blair bereft of such political and moral stamina because he has not been tested. When he is, he may find it. I only observe that if exports plummet, and inflation picks up, and unemployment begins to rise, where is the whole core — the very heart — of the "Welfare-to-Work revolution"? If NHS waiting lists climb and the economy turns down, where is the money to answer the huge popular trust now reposed in florid promises about schools and hospitals? If devolution brings nationalists to power in Edinburgh, the Irish peace crashes, Clinton stumbles, and Labour's European dream sours... if, in short, you subtract the word "winning" from everything new Labour is doing, what is the residue? Is it success alone that propels this spectacular flying machine, or is there more? When the wave breaks over him and Tony Blair comes off his roll, can he swim?

The price is never right

Labour can't afford to peddle policy, says John Lloyd

Our political parties are in danger of becoming rich men's trumpets because they are becoming more and more dependent on their money. Labour has a chance to mute the notes they blow. But it will mean bucking a trend, upsetting new friends and placing the party's funding at risk.

Lord Neill of Bladen is to report on party funding later this year. He is one of those figures whose public life has been so impeccable that to have put an issue under his tutelage is to assume that it is solved. Party funding is a dark corridor of British public life. At least light will now be shone fitfully upon it.

Of the three major national parties, the Liberal Democrats escape censure because only they are not offered very large donations. The Conservatives, by contrast, are in a bad way. They once enjoyed support from major companies, but over the past ten years much of this has been withdrawn at the same time as the party's membership base eroded. It was forced further on to the terrain of the rich and powerful; and it found the ground sticky.

It went abroad; in particular to Hong Kong, where a number of wealthy men gave sums ranging from £50,000 to £1 million. These donors were wooed by ministers from John Major down. One such — probably the largest — was Ma Ching Kwa, who gave between £1 million and £1.5 million. His money was aimed at securing an amnesty for his father who had been accused of drug smuggling and had fled to Taiwan. While this lobbying was going on, his father died, unamnestied. In anger, Ma caused one of his papers to write that his "expectations had been raised" that an amnesty would be forthcoming.

Stephen Byers, the Schools Minister, who in opposition was the scourge of Tory party funders, still believes that much more waits to be revealed. But his own party has its problems. In particular, it has Bernie Ecclestone. He seems reluctant to satisfy Lord Neill's curiosity as to why he gave the Labour Party £1 million for its election campaign. The suspicion lingers that he did so in order to assist his successful lobbying against a ban on cigarette advertising at Formula One events.

It may be that Mr Ecclestone did not see the £1 million as a specifically targeted investment. But there is no doubt that he did see it as an investment rather than a generous gesture to "a capable young guy who wanted to take Britain in the right direction" (as he put it). In an interview last December, Mr Ecclestone indicated that he gave money to Labour to oppose the power of trade unions and keep taxes on the rich low. This was the reason why rich individuals (including him) had earlier given money to the Tories.

About £7 million was raised for Labour by Lord Levy, mainly from other figures in the London Jewish community. This had been a rich source for the Tories. Its shift to Labour partly reflects its emphasis on social values which it now feels Labour caters for better, while being unthreatening to commercial ones. Partly, too, it sees new Labour as supportive of Israel in a way Labour in the 1980s was not. Jewish businessmen have, often, a strong commitment to Israel and Zionism; that this is linked to political giving is beyond question. The row which Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, had with Binyamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, and the present visit by the Prime Minister to Israel have, as one of their backdrops, a calculation on continued funding from the Jewish business community.

The questions multiply. Did Lord Sainsbury give £1 million to Labour to assist consideration of planning permissions for new supermarkets or because he also thought Mr Blair was a capable guy? Did Robert Earl of Planet Hollywood replace Mr Ecclestone's returned £1 million within the week to have the Government look more kindly on his expansion plans? Lord Neill's curiosity will be whetted by such questions.

The trade unions — which remain Labour's largest funders — will on Monday decide how hostile they will become if Mr Blair decides not to allow union recognition to be granted on a simple majority of those voting. They will be tempted to use their donations as a leverage. They will ask what value they are getting for their money.

It is not good to have unions dictate terms to governments, and Mr Blair knows how badly that is still seen. But it is no better than wealthy individuals giving money.

Lord Neill seems unlikely to recommend state funding, but will almost certainly recommend transparency, a cap on spending and a stronger ethical watchdog. These will help. But the malign effect which influence-peddling has on politics and public trust is so corrosive that new sources — including the State — should be urgently considered. Even if their aims are good, the wealthy must be stemmed from buying policy. It gets harder to stop, but who is in the business of hard choices?

The author is assistant editor of the *New Statesman*.

Fighting back

IT IS revenge served so cold it is almost frozen. Donald Dewar, whose wife, Alison, left him 28 years ago for Lord Irvine of Lairg, has made his first public comments about the Lord Chancellor. I think they can be filed under "unhelpful". The civility of the Scottish Secretary's relations with Irvine have been the subject of much speculation. Now he has spoken: about vanity, values and, most damagingly, wallpaper. For Dewar, interviewed for a TV show about Tony Blair's first year in office, it must have been sweet: Alison took his children to live with Irvine; he has not remarried.

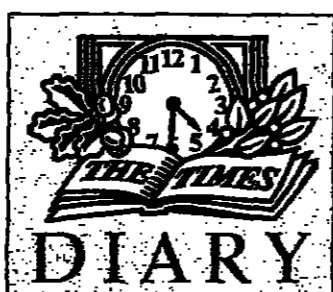
In reference to Irvine's £650,000 sprucing-up of his official residence, Dewar was asked how much he has spent refurbishing his own office. "Nothing, just some fabric repair," he says. He had chosen to spend his budget on the Scottish people instead. "The trappings of my office? I cannot think of any expenditure that could legitimately be put under that heading. I think there ought to be a proper balance on these matters," he told Channel 4's *Blair's Year*, in comments which, I gather, have mysteriously been cut from this Sunday's

broadcast. A leading question follows: "So you have spent nothing like £650,000 for instance?" The answer? "I don't think I have except on things like education and health." The Scottish Secretary immediately checked himself. "I'd better not defy the gods by saying I have not been involved in controversy of this kind," he remarked.

In what might be mistaken for an attack on Irvine, Mo Mowlam also warns ministers against big spending: "I think we have to be careful that we don't give the press any excuse. You have to make those decisions carefully." Mowlam has turned down weekends at country houses as "too dodgy".

● A MINISTER generously presented me with a pen yesterday to celebrate the British EU presidency. In smaller letters the ballpoint declared that it was made in Germany.

Whip hand
THE public face of the pro-hunting campaign has taken legal action against her local hunt after it trespassed on her farm. Janet George,



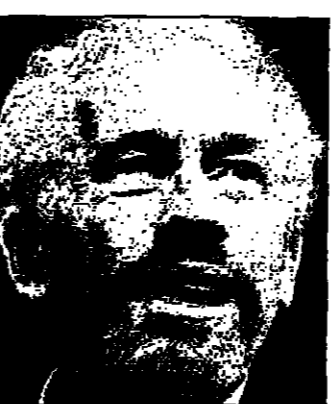
● PRINCE WILLIAM battled manfully during trials for a place in the Eton cricket team yesterday. His silly cover drives were admired by female twins, both dressed in red jackets, who bounced around the boundary, quite enthralled.

In full Fry
STEPHEN FRY has penned a ferocious defence of "Cool Britannia". In yesterday's *International Herald Tribune* he dismisses attacks on Tony Blair's rebranding of Britain as a "veritable triumph of bile over substance". The thespian rebuffs "nannysish" suggestions that the only symbols of Cool Britannia were drug-crazed and abusive pop stars who disgrace the nation overseas. Such attacks summon up a



SIMON CALLOW has had second thoughts about his death in *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, the British smash film. With shooting for a sequel starting in Notting Hill on Monday, he regrets that Gareth, the homosexual bon viveur he played, will not rise again. *Dallas*-style: "They killed Gareth off and I haven't been asked," laments Callow. Andie MacDowell, the first film's totty interest, will also not appear: her role is to be played by Julia Roberts (pictured with Callow), who would, I fear, have held little appeal for Simon, a keen bachelor.

"vision of bilious Indian Army majors writing disgustedly to the newspapers to deplore the disappearance of the policeman's brisk salute and the milkman's cheery whistle". Signing himself simply "Stephen Fry, London", he lambasts a correspondent for saying that Asian leaders in London recently left wondering how we ever managed to acquire an Empire.



"Would symbols of the Indian Mutiny, of the Chinese Opium Wars, of Malayan rubber plantations and the Palestine Mandate have sent out the right signals? Simply because the Union Jack and the Royal Family are ancient does not make them any less examples of symbol, logo and slogan."

JASPER GERARD

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NO TURNING BACK

Ulster's Unionists face a momentous decision

The referendum on which Northern Ireland's future depends does not take place until May 22 but tomorrow decisions will be made in Dublin and Belfast which could settle the matter. If the delegates to Sinn Fein's Ard Fheis in the Republic and the Ulster Unionist Council meeting in the North signal their solid support for the Good Friday agreement then the referendum is likely to become, if not a formality, then a stately procession towards an overwhelming "yes". If, however, either body makes its opposition clear then matters assumed to be settled last Friday will have to be painfully re-examined.

The nature of current republican debates is, deliberately, opaque. Sinn Fein does not parade its divisions in public and prefers, if there are differences, to shed leaves rather than break branches. If there are fundamental objections to the leadership's strategy among significant numbers of republicans then those are likely to emerge, and then not fully, some time ahead. The Ulster Unionist Party, however, is by contrast a thoroughly decentralised and democratic organisation. It has the defects of those virtues and has been riven by argument since the agreement was signed last Friday. Pragmatists and purists have been seeking to sway minds and hearts.

The 860 delegates who meet will find in the agreement a Gladstone bag of bitter pills to swallow. The formula intended to ensure paramilitary decommissioning is disturbingly similar to the formula adopted, and then neglected, at the beginning of talks. The Prime Minister has written to the Unionist leader David Trimble to assure him that no party can participate in the administration of the Province without giving up its arms. But many nationalists believe that republicans will place their pitchforks in the haystacks and insist that decommissioning should be left to "trust and rust".

The proposed reform of the Royal Ulster Constabulary may, some Unionists believe,

lead to a lowering of the State's guard just as terrorist prisoners are being released to rejoin their comrades. Tony Blair has moved to reassure the Unionist population that the RUC will not be disbanded, but fears remain that the force's capacity to operate at its current level of vigilance will diminish.

Those fears, and other suspicions about the operation of cross-border bodies, will be highlighted by the agreement's opponents. They have already weighed with the Orange Order. The opponents of the agreement within the Ulster Unionist Party are neither hysterical nor narrow but their arguments must be viewed in a broader context. If the Ulster Unionist Council votes to reject the agreement reached by their leader, then there will be joy unconfined in republican ranks. The Unionists will, in London's eyes, have placed themselves outside the pale. If Unionists say "no" then the British Government will still proceed with all that is unattractive in the agreement. The pleasure of asserting ancestral rights will be bought at the cost of influence in Downing Street.

That influence, deployed during the negotiations that led to last week's agreement, has secured for Unionists a deal which gives Ulster's democratic majority the chance to shape the Province's destiny. Unlike Sunningdale, or the Anglo-Irish agreement, the institutions envisaged in the Good Friday accord will be accountable to Ulster's people and entrenched within the Union. Cross-border bodies will operate within the constraints of a "veto" always in the Unionist pocket. Armed with that assurance, genuine co-operation has a chance to take root.

Unionists must ask themselves what is the alternative to the deal which David Trimble reached. Are they prepared to make from unease a posture of defiance? Or will they trust to their numbers, and negotiators, to safeguard their interests in new, democratic, institutions? It is a momentous decision. There can be no turning back.

BACK TO THE BALLOT BOX

An unusually unpredictable set of local elections

Three weeks today the results of some 4,300 seats affecting 166 councils will be available. This is unlikely to be the cause of enormous public interest. Turnout in British local elections is always low by international standards. It has invariably been exceptionally low in the year following a general election. Whatever the results, they will doubtless be regarded as an initial public statement on the standing of Tony Blair and his Government. This assumption that local elections exist to provide an opinion outlet on national matters is accurate but undesirable.

The relative anonymity of these contests this year is especially regrettable. For the first time in many years they will not be framed by the exceptional unpopularity of the Government. It is also unlikely, though, that there will be a "Blair effect" strong enough to deliver votes automatically to Labour. There is thus the chance that at least in some places local issues will enjoy an unusual standing. There will also be the novel innovation in London of a referendum on the introduction of an elected mayor and restoration of an assembly. Finally, this campaign contains in deep camouflage three different sorts of partisan struggles within it.

These battles will make the subsequent war of interpretation strikingly complicated. In metropolitan districts, the Conservatives have not yet had time to recover from the utter devastation endured during the Major era. That is especially unfortunate for them as these areas often contain the least appealing examples of Labour councils. As matters stand, the Liberal Democrats are best placed to make the most of charges of corruption, cronyism and incompetence. Paddy Ashdown's party will probably do

well in such urban terrain, especially in Liverpool, Sheffield and Stockport.

The story may well be rather different in the shire districts. The Conservatives stand a solid chance of retaking seats lost in the 1994 landslide against them. After years of decline, the Tories will put forward a larger number of candidates. They have already achieved a net advance of 55 council seats since Mr Blair entered Downing Street. That trend may continue with the Liberal Democrats suffering losses as a consequence. This will be the aspect that William Hague highlights after the election.

The last and least predictable component is London. Adjacent boroughs offered dramatically different results in 1990 and 1994. A further unknown dynamic this time is whether the referendum on the mayor, as Labour hopes, will increase turnout. In the absence of any effective opposition to the proposal, this plebiscite may be electorally inconsequential. The Tories find themselves on the defensive in their flagship councils — Wandsworth and Westminster — while also extremely competitive in Brent and Croydon. Astrology may prove as much help as psephology in understanding the outcome.

In the end, there may be no dramatic change in party control of councils. That would be an apt result in many ways. Although the Government has developed a number of radical ideas for local government, such as executive mayors, none has yet been implemented. There is little indication that the Treasury is willing to offer enhanced fiscal independence. Local government may remain as Harold Macmillan described it when he was the relevant minister: "A poor thing but mine own."

CHEATING LIFE

The world needed Pol Pot to face trial

During his lifetime, Pol Pot cheated more than a million Cambodians of their lives; now, as reports of his death are confirmed, he has cheated the nation he terrorised of the chance to call to account one of the most monstrous instigators of mass killing and systematic torture. This is not the first time that the dwindling Khmer Rouge fanatics in the jungle have reported his demise. Almost two years ago he was said to have died. This time, pictures of the former leader dead have been produced just as the Americans were drawing up plans to have him arrested and tried for war crimes.

It does seem as though the world is finally rid of the mild-mannered butcher of the killing fields. There must be doubt, however, that he died peacefully. Intermecne quarrels in the Khmer Rouge's claustrophobic hide-out had finally isolated Pol Pot, but not before he had had several of his former lieutenants and their families murdered. He was given a show trial — for ideological deviance rather than for his real crimes — and sentenced to incarceration in the jungle, though never handed over to the Cambodian Government. His death is politically convenient. The remnants of the Khmer Rouge can surrender or slink away and blame the orders for mass murder on their dead comrade; and the ghostly secrets of exactly what happened when Democratic Kampuchea slaughtered its own people will never now be properly documented.

His death makes it harder to exorcise the evil that he perpetrated. For a war crimes trial is not simply a chance to question and condemn; it is a catharsis for victims that pinpoints responsibility, serves as a warning and helps the process of healing and reconciliation. The greater the crime, the more necessary is the formal confrontation of evil with retribution. Nations that bleed demand justice to stanch the memories; that is what lay behind the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem; that is why Bosnia will never be at peace until Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic are brought to account for their bloody ethnic cleansing. And until individual responsibility can be established, all those associated in any way with the evil are judged collectively, and a renewal of normal life becomes impossible.

Cambodians want to know how their terrible history occurred — even if this implicates thousands now lurking in the shadows or highlights questions about outsiders' contributory responsibility and blindness to events. A trial would have illuminated the way that an obsessive idealism, playing on popular resentment of Western dominance, can go so terribly wrong in a Third World where traditional values have broken down. And humanity would have learnt, as it has from Auschwitz, to read the danger signals in time. Pol Pot has cheated the world; his henchmen must still be identified and brought to account.

Incentive to keep Ulster agreement

From Mr Tony Fuller

Sir, It would appear from the reaction of the Grand Orange Lodge (report, April 16) that the peace agreement in Ireland is, to say the least, suffering a setback.

Perhaps the prospect of peace and security in that region is not sufficient incentive for its leaders and Ireland's other political chiefs to resolve their differences.

We are constantly informed by the media that the "ordinary and decent" members of the community in Ireland want peace. If the present agreement fails then it is not about time those ordinary and decent citizens came forward and elected leaders who could fulfil their stated objectives?

The incentive could be enhanced by the prospect of a referendum at the millennium, when the ordinary and decent residents of the rest of the UK could have the opportunity of securing their independence.

Further negotiations, if required, could of course continue between the Irish parties concerned, refereed by the UN, the Americans, or anyone else who wants the job.

Yours faithfully,
TONY FULLER,
Beech House,
Worcester Road,
Chipping Norton,
Oxfordshire OX7 5XJ,
April 16.

From Mr John Marshall

Sir, As the hardliners among the Unionists in Northern Ireland attempt to unpick the brave and far-seeing compromise reached at Stormont on Good Friday, perhaps the British Government should remind them not to assume that rejection of the agreement will simply mean a return to the status quo ante.

Let the Government make it clear to them that it cannot be taken for granted that British taxes and — more important — the lives of British soldiers are on indefinite offer to perpetuate a blinkered tradition.

It is not only the people of Northern Ireland who are weary of terrorism and intransigence.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN MARSHALL,
48 Long Lane,
Ickenham,
Uxbridge UB10 8TA,
April 16.

Late-night sittings

From Mr Nigel Evans, MP for Ribbles Valley (Conservative)

Sir, It is necessary for the Government to conduct its activities in the spirit of fair play if fewer late-night sittings of the House of Commons are to be a reality (letter, April 4).

As one who delivered an adjournment debate speech on farming in the Ribbles Valley at 6.15am on March 26, I am keen to see progress on this front.

In cases where timetabling of Bills is agreed, Opposition scrutiny time is eaten away by the sudden announcement of government statements, or other parliamentary business.

To add insult to injury, at the report stage of the Government of Wales Bill later on March 26, the Government introduced swaths of new clauses; this left little or no time to discuss important new Opposition clauses, some of which were not even discussed because the timetable fell before they were reached.

If the Commons is to do its work properly, and its members are to get a decent night's sleep, the Government could do no better than review these procedures.

Thank heaven for the House of Lords!
Yours ever,
NIGEL EVANS
(Conservative Constitutional Spokesman),
House of Commons,
April 15.

Bulldozer job?

From Mr Jason Berry

Sir, You report today (News in brief) that the MP for Huddersfield, Barry Sheerman, wants us to destroy Buckingham Palace as part of our millennium celebrations.

I wonder if Mr Sheerman would be willing to change his criterion from "the ugliest building blighting the land" to "the ugliest things blighting the land"?

If so, I consider Huddersfield to be a lot less attractive than Buckingham Palace.
Yours faithfully,
JASON BERRY,
44 Ramshaw Drive,
Chelmsford,
Essex CM2 6UB,
April 16.

From Mr Ian Ferguson

Sir, I suggest that at the top of Mr Barry Sheerman's "millennium destruction challenge" list should be the Millennium Dome.

Yours faithfully,
IAN FERGUSON,
Vika House,
The Green, Upper Quinton,
Stratford-upon-Avon,
Warwickshire CV37 8SX,
April 16.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Gays' confrontation in the cathedral

From Mr Peter Tatchell

Sir, The OutRage! protest in Canterbury Cathedral has been condemned by some as "appalling" (report and photograph, April 13; letters, April 15).

I would suggest, however, that the brief disruption of Easter Service pales into insignificance when compared with Dr Carey's continuing support for discrimination against lesbians and gay men. What is truly appalling is his homophobia, not our intervention seeking justice.

Sunday's protest was necessary because Dr Carey is unwilling to listen to the concerns of the homosexual community. In the eight years since he became Archbishop, he has refused to meet the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement. When Dr Carey closes the door on dialogue, confronting him is the only option.

There is much to confront him with. On five gay civil rights issues, the Anglican leader condones inequality.

By opposing an equal age of consent, he endorses the criminalisation of 16 and 17-year-old gay men who, under current discriminatory laws, face up to two years' imprisonment for consenting homosexual relationships.

Dr Carey is against gay marriage and has declined to support legal rights for homosexual couples, thus depriving partners of recognition as next-of-kin in the event of illness or death.

The Church of England Children's Society, of which the Archbishop is the President, bans gay foster parents; thus young people, who could be cared for by loving and responsible gay couples, are being left in the emotional coldness of a children's home.

By insisting on celibacy for gay clergy Dr Carey gives a green light to their harassment and dismissal. The Archbishop also wants to exempt the Church from the anti-discrimination clause of the Human Rights Bill, thereby permitting Anglican institutions to deny equal treatment to homosexuals.

We make no apology for challeng-

ing the Archbishop. The real outrage is not our cathedral protest, but Dr Carey's advocacy of discrimination.

Yours sincerely,
PETER TATCHELL,
OutRage!,
5 Peter Street, WIV 3RR,
April 14.

From Mr Derek Kemp

Sir, My wife and I were sitting at the foot of the pulpit steps when the crude, offensive demonstration by gay rights activists began in Canterbury Cathedral, jostling Dr Carey in the process. Understandably, for many in the congregation this was deeply upsetting. If the purpose of this intervention was to raise sympathy for their cause, it was certainly an odd way to go about it.

You report that Peter Tatchell will be prosecuted under the Ecclesiastical Courts Jurisdiction Act of 1860. When he comes before the magistrates' court in May an apology to all concerned would not come amiss if he has a shred of grace about him.

I salute Archbishop Carey for his aplomb, his compassion for these misguided people and for his promptness in defusing what could have become an ugly situation.

Yours etc,
DEREK KEMP,
Fairings, Hembrook Drive,
Horsham, West Sussex RH13 6EW,
April 13.

From Mr Adrian Russell

Sir, Mr Geoff Hennessy (letter, April 15) calls on the Church to "confront" issues such as homosexuality. Surely it is precisely the fact that Dr Carey and others do confront these issues, rather than going with the contemporary trendy flow, that so enrages Peter Tatchell and his friends.

Yours faithfully,
A. J. RUSSELL,
60 High Street, Lytchett Matravers,
Poole, Dorset BH16 6BH,
April 15.

Renewable energy

From Ms Stephanie Tunmore

Sir, Nigel Hawkes, in his advocacy of nuclear power as a solution to climate change (Science briefing, April 6), omits to mention the costs of decommissioning and the insoluble problem of nuclear waste disposal. The twin rocks on which the industry has foundered. He dismisses renewable energy sources such as wind and solar, on the grounds that the volumes required render these solutions impractical. Not true.

Forty solar panels can power a house and every square metre installed on a UK building will prevent the emission of over two tonnes of CO₂ during its 30-year lifetime. A 1992 DTI study concluded that solar panels could generate two thirds of the UK's electricity requirements.

The UK can also boast an enormous untapped offshore wind resource. The European Commission has calculated that the wind resource up to 30km from the coast is equivalent to three times the UK's current annual electricity consumption. Unlike Britain, other countries are pressing ahead with ambitious wind energy programmes. Indeed Denmark will meet half of its electricity needs from offshore wind by 2030.

Blowing the whistle

From Professor J. F. Pickering

Sir, The letter (April 6) from Ian McCartney, Minister of State at the DTI, regarding the "Whistleblowers' Bill" is encouraging, particularly his assurance that "workers who act responsibly in disclosing wrongdoing... in the course of their work should not be victimised for doing so".

What is now needed is appropriate redress for those who have already suffered such victimisation. Perhaps Mr McCartney's ministerial colleagues in the DfEE might lead the way by calling on the University of Portsmouth to make appropriate redress to Ms Bonnie Tall — a former Vice-Chancellor's personal assistant, who had to resign in 1994 after blowing the whistle on him for fiddling his

expenses (article by Gary Slapper, Law, March 31) — and myself who, as Deputy Vice-Chancellor, had been made redundant after drawing attention to the matter.

Yours faithfully,
J. F. PICKERING,
1 The Fairway,
Rowlands Castle,
Hampshire PO9 6AQ,
April 7.

From Mr Patrick Connell

Sir, Protection for whistleblowers is not enough. They should be rewarded for the risks they take and the public good they serve.

Yours sincerely,
PATRICK CONNELL,
13c Herbrand Street, WC1N 1JJ,
April 6.

Open season

From Mr Anthony Marshall

Sir, I have received a letter from London Electricity offering to supply me with gas at a cheaper rate than that offered by Thames Water. I eagerly await a counter-offer from British Gas to supply my next rail season ticket at a cheaper rate than British Telecom.

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY MARSHALL,
13 Tideswell Road, SW15 6LJ,
antmar@globalnet.co.uk
April 15.

Paper clips

From Miss Marjorie Dawson

Sir, Is there any word in the dictionary to describe "inveterate cutters-out of interesting items from newspapers"? The habit, once started, seems to be incurable.

Yours truly,
MARJORIE DAWSON,
35 Dunmore Road, SW20 8TN,
April 16.

Funding for rural Britain's new deal

From Councillor Mrs V. B. Bishop

Sir, The "new deal pledged for rural Britain" (report and leading article, April 13) has much that is welcome. However, neither your front page nor your editorial gave sufficient attention to the real test: the review of central government grant to rural local authorities, which was promised as urgent before the election and could now, it seems, be several years away.

More statutory duties have been passed to both county and district authorities, yet even for the fastest developing areas in the country central funding has been cut painfully in favour of urban councils.

The most unpropitious rural councils are having to increase their tax demands to the point where they are up against the spending limits set by central government. Unless this is corrected, the "new deal" will be worth less than it should be.

Yours faithfully,
BRENDA BISHOP,
The Ropewalk, Hauxton Road,
Little Shelford, Cambridge CB2 5HJ,
April 13.

From Mr Martin Ancombe

Sir, Rather than pour money into regional agencies that will no doubt generate mountains of paper and volumes of hot air, Mr Meacher would do better to ensure the Treasury properly funds shire councils.

Better still, he should give whatever cash he can muster directly to rural town councils such as ours, which are having to maintain youth and community centres (abandoned by our county council to meet schools' budgets) vital to the fabric and wellbeing of rural communities.

Yours faithfully,
MARTIN ANSCOMBE,
2 Harvey Street,
Watton, Norfolk IP25 6EP,
April 13.

From Mr Charles Wide, QC

Sir, Mr Meacher announced "a direct and detailed response to the Countryside March", but according to your report the issues which were addressed do not include field sports.

The march was initiated and organised by the Countryside Alliance, a pro-field sports organisation. The trigger was Mr Michael Foster's Bill to criminalise hunting with hounds. Transport to London was largely arranged by field sports groups, especially the hunts. The key concern of the overwhelming majority of those marching was plain from the banners, placards, badges, ties and sweatshirts.

There is a range of other concerns about the quality of rural life which found expression on March 1. These are important and the Government should address them. But the central message of the Countryside March should not be distorted by those who would prefer not to have heard it.

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES WIDE,
Church Cottage, Main Street,
Glaphorch, Peterborough PE8 5BE,
April 14.

Conduct unbecoming

From the Reverend Peter Sutton

Sir, A self-confessed adulterer holding the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in the Army has been found not guilty of conduct unbecoming the character of an officer (report, April 10).

Does this judgment mean that adultery is now acceptable behaviour in the eyes of those in charge of our Armed Forces as well as the Foreign Office? If so I believe it sets a bad standard.

Yours faithfully,
PETER SUTTON,
St. Faith's Church,
Victoria Square,
Lee-on-the-Solent,
Hampshire PO13 9NF,
April 10.

Circle line

From Inspector Stephen Morrill

Sir, Mr Marcel Berenblut, who has difficulty in locating Watford Junction railway station (letter, April 15), could always have rung Watford Police Station for directions. Our staff are local, as we have not yet devised a method of teleworking to deal with our customers.

Not only could we tell him the way, we could also suggest a safe car park.

Yours sincerely,
STEPHEN MORRILL,
Watford Police Station,
Shardy Lane, Watford,
Hertfordshire WD1 1DD,
April 15.

From Mr Andrew Taylor

Sir, Mr Berenblut may be the victim of a conspiracy. It could be by a phone company that gains from extra calls. A seller of road maps may also be involved. Or perhaps it's the environment movement. Is it trying to ease congestion by making it difficult for motorists to find their way by car, so they end up going by train?

Yours faithfully,
A. TAYLOR,
49 Seymour Court,
Muswell Hill, N10 1ED,
April 15.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

COURT CIRCULAR

ST JAMES'S PALACE
Patron of English National Opera, this afternoon received Mr Nicholas Payne and Mr John Ward.

Today's royal engagement

The Princess Royal, as president, Royal Yachting Association, will attend the Royal Yachting Association National Youth Sailing Championships at Looe Sailing Club, Buller Street, East Looe, Cornwall, at 11.30.

Service luncheon

Royal Scots Dragoon Guards
The Lord Provost of Edinburgh attended a luncheon of the Regimental Council of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards held yesterday in Edinburgh Castle.

Service dinner

University of Wales Air Squadron
The Lord-Lieutenant of South Glamorgan attended the annual dinner of the University of Wales Air Squadron held last night at RAF St Athan.

Dinners

Glaziers' Company
Mr G.C. Bond, Master of the Glaziers' Company, with the Warden received members of the court and their guests at the St. Mark's Day Quarter Court dinner held last night at Glaziers' Hall.

Carmen's Company
Mr J.E. Racliff, Master of the Carmen's Company, presided at a dinner held last night at Carpenters' Hall.

During the dinner, the Master presented the Carmen's Sword of Honour for 1998 to Lieutenant P.S. Reehal, R.L.C., whose father won the sword in 1980.

The Institution of Civil Engineers
Mr Nick Raynsford MP, Minister for London and Construction, was the principal guest and speaker at the annual dinner of the Institution of Civil Engineers held last night at Grosvenor House.

Lincoln's Inn
The Megary Scholarship for 1998-99 has been awarded to Peter de Verneuil-Smith, of Selwyn College, Cambridge.

School news

Holmwood House

Summer Term began yesterday at Holmwood House, Colchester. Sports Day is on Friday, May 22. The Queenwood Ball will be held on Saturday, June 20 and term will end with Speech Day on Saturday, July 4.

Queenswood School

Summer Term at Queenswood begins on Sunday, April 19, with Caroline Rowe as Head Girl and Lisa Collier as Deputy Head Girl. Confirmation will be on Saturday, May 16 at 10.45am, the service being conducted by the Bishop of Hereford and the Rev G. Rogers.

St John's School, Leatherhead

Summer Term began on April 16 at St John's School, Leatherhead. Richard Hickson is School Captain, Charlotte Booth is Deputy School Captain and Joe Porter is Captain of Cricket.

Sherborne School for Girls

The following awards have been made for September 1998: 1st Scholarship: Kristabelle Williams, Newham House, Lacey Guest, 13, Kings Hill.



This rare German masterpiece, The Lamentation of Christ with a Group of Women, has been acquired by the National Gallery of Scotland.

The Royal College of Ophthalmologists

A ceremony for the admission of new fellows and members of The Royal College of Ophthalmologists was held at the Royal College of Physicians of London yesterday.

Fruiters

The Master of the Fruiters' Company, accompanied by the Warden and Honorary Assistants, yesterday unveiled a plaque on the new development at No 1 Queenshithe, Thames Court, City of London.

Brunei University

Lord Wakeham, Chairman of the Press Complaints Commission, has been installed as Chancellor of Brunel University.

Atlantic Council

Dr Geoffrey Lee Williams, Director of the Institute of Economic and Political Studies, Cambridge, was the guest speaker at an Atlantic Council meeting at the University of Cambridge.

Church in Wales

Diocese of Swansea and Brecon Canon Geraint Morgan Hugh Hughes, Rector of Llandrindod with Cefnllwyd and Diserth, to be Dean of Brunei in succession to the Very Rev John Harris.

How Roman Britain went on and on

By NORMAN HAMMOND, ARCHAEOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

ROMAN Britain lasted longer than Roman rule, evidence from western England and Wales suggests. Classical culture persisted for perhaps three centuries after the legions withdrew in AD410.

Dr Dark, a lecturer in politics at Reading University, points out in British Archaeology that in the 4th century AD Britain was not a single province but a diocese of four or five provinces.

Roman terminology and decorations also persisted into the "Dark Age" in Wales and the West, according to Susan Youngs of the British Museum and David Morgan Evans of the Society of Antiquaries.

Far from descending into chaos after AD410, much of Britain seems to have remained stable, far more Romanised than has been supposed, and with a transition into the Saxon age at a far higher level of organisational complexity than many scholars believed.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr J.S. Black and Miss S.R. Bower
The engagement is announced between Jonathan, son of His Honour Judge and Mrs Barrington Black, of Harpsfield, and Sara, daughter of Mr and Mrs Clive Bower, of Stannore.

Mr R.V. Bower and Miss K.B. Vandermeer
The engagement is announced between Robert Vern, son of Mr and Mrs David Bower, of Lincoln, and Katherine Belinda (Kate), younger daughter of Mr Roy Vandermeer, of Epsom, Surrey.

Mr D.J. Cowling and Miss P.L. Davenport
The engagement is announced in Hong Kong between David, son of Mr and Mrs Peter Cowling, of London, and Philippa, eldest daughter, of Mr Henry Davenport, of London, and Mrs Penelope Davenport, of Buckinghamshire.

Mr B. Gelman and Miss M. Jones
The engagement is announced between Bruce Gelman, of Chicago, Illinois, USA, and Michele Jones, of Pimlico, London.

Major J.D. Gray and Miss L.J. Bowden
The engagement is announced between Major Jonathan Gray, The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (Princess Louise), only son of Mr and Mrs Ronald Gray, of Colinton Village, Edinburgh, and Lucy Jane, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Gervase Bowden, of Clapham, London.

Mr J.S. Healy and Miss A.F. Hughes
The engagement is announced between Josh, elder son of Mrs Alec Healy and the late Alec Healy, of Barkway, Hertfordshire, and Abigail, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Ernest Hughes, of Lathom, Lancashire.

Mr G.C. Insh and Miss L.J. Duckett
The engagement is announced between Grant, elder son of Mr and Mrs Keith Insh, of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, and Lisa, daughter of Mr and Mrs Patrick Duckett, of Bath, Somerset.

Mr N.E.F. Laughlan and Miss S.E. Bell
The engagement is announced between Nigel, younger son of the late Captain R.F.G. Laughlan, Royal Navy, and of Mrs Ronnie Laughlan, of Old Portsmouth, Hampshire, and Sarah, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs Helen Bell, of Long Crendon, Buckinghamshire.

Mr H.G. Preston and the Noble M.L. de Piro d'Amico Inguazze
The engagement is announced between Hugh, younger son of Brigadier and Mrs Roger Preston, of Northampton, North Yorkshire, and Louisa, daughter of the Marquis and Marchioness de Piro, of Valletta, Malta.

Mr R. van Rooij and Miss S.F. Hanbury
The engagement is announced between René, son of De Heer and Mervout Johan van Rooij, The Netherlands, and Sam, daughter of Major Reginald Hanbury, of Fiddlethorpe, Dorset, and of Mrs Pippa Hanbury, of Market Rasen, Lincolnshire.

Anniversaries today

BIRTHS: John Ford, dramatist, Islington, Devon, baptised this day, 1586; Edward Stillingfleet, bishop, Cranborne, Dorset, 1635; James Thom, sculptor, Lochlee, Tayside, 1802 (he died on this day, New York, 1850); Sir Leonard Woolley, archaeologist, excavated Ur of the Chaldees, London, 1890; Nikita Khrushchev, Prime Minister of the Soviet Union 1953-64, Kalinovka, 1894; Thornton Wilder, novelist and dramatist, Madison, Wisconsin, 1897.

TRADE: 0171 481 982 FAX: 0171 481 9313

BMDs: 0171 680 6880 PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

Birthdays today
Mrs Sirmavo Baranaike, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, 82; Mr Chris Brer, jazz musician, 68; Mr John Barrett, tennis commentator, 67; Mr C.J. Brockmoss, former chief executive, Axa Equity and Law Life Assurance Society, 62; Miss Joan Clague, former director of nursing services, Marie Curie Memorial Foundation, 67; Miss Ruth Echells, former Principal, St John's College, Durham, 67; Miss Clare Francis, novelist and former yachtswoman, 52; Miss Bella Freud, fashion designer, 37; Mrs Anne Harris, former national chairman, National Federation of Women's Institutes, 73; Mr Henry Kelly, broadcaster, 52; Mr James Last, bandleader, 69; Viscount Margesson, 76; the Hon Sir Humphrey Maud, former diplomat, 64; Professor Sir Peter Morris, FRCS, transplant surgeon, 64; Mr Ricardo Patrese, racing driver, 44; Mr Tristram Ricketts, chief executive, British Horseracing Board, 52; Mrs Dora Saint (Miss Read), 99; Mr Christopher Spangberg, a deputy chairman, Hambros, 59; Sir Michael Vernon, former chairman, RNLi, 72; the Right Rev J. Yates, former Bishop at Lambeth, 73.

PERSONAL COLUMN

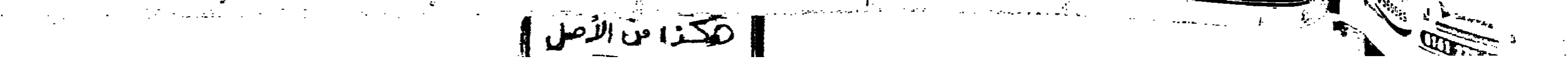
DEATHS
CHILDS-ROSE - William James (M.D.), Founder and retired Director and Managing Director of the C.L.C. Group of Companies, on 15th April 1998, aged 82 years, after a long illness, peacefully at home, surrounded by his family.

DEATHS
MAGDOON - Dr. Robert passed away peacefully at the Royal National Hospital on 14th April 1998, aged 86 years, after a long illness, surrounded by his family.

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IN MEMORIAM - WAR
IN MEMORIAM - PRIVATE
WANTED
TICKETS FOR SALE
TICKETS



OBITUARIES

SIR RONALD MILLAR

Sir Ronald Millar, playwright and political speechwriter, died yesterday aged 78. He was born in Reading on November 12, 1919.

Over the years, Margaret Thatcher wore out teams of speechwriters, but Ronald Millar outlasted even her, becoming one of the few members of her entourage to go on to work for John Major. He gave Thatcher many of her memorable lines, including "The lady's not for turning" and "The Old Testament prophets did not say, 'Brothers, I want a consensus'". Only he was trusted with inserting jokes — a very serious business for Mrs Thatcher. Occasionally they had to be explained to her.

Yet Millar became a speechwriter by accident. His first love was the theatre, and he was the author of popular plays, musicals and film scripts, as well as an effective administrator of his beloved Haymarket Theatre.

Ronald Graeme Millar's father died when he was only 18 months old. His mother never remarried, but combined a life on the theatre boards with bringing up the boy. A benefactor helped to pay for him to take a scholarship to Charterhouse, and he found out years later that his mother had pleaded with the benefactor and his schoolmasters to keep him away from the theatre. She wanted him to prepare for a more secure career and had the Diplomatic Service in mind.

Millar went to King's College, Cambridge in 1939 to read Classics. But he showed little interest in his studies and joined several drama societies instead. In 1940 he joined the Navy, and he was very disappointed to be invalided out in 1943. He then toured the provinces as an actor and started to try his hand at writing. He realised that his special talent was for dialogue.

He made rapid progress, writing film scripts for Ealing Studios between 1944 and 1948 and having two plays — *Frieda* (1946) and *Champagne for Delilah* (1948) — performed in London. He was then seduced by lucrative offers to go to

Hollywood and write scripts for MGM. But his real passion was to write for live audiences. Having learnt as an actor how to deliver a speech and manipulate an audience, Millar knew how to make a play "work". After six years in Hollywood, he returned to Britain in 1954 and began a productive period of writing.

With a liking for costume drama and a nose for a good story, he adapted Rudolph Besier's drama about the Brownings as the long-running musical *Robert and Elizabeth* (1964), and had another long run with *Abelard and Heloise* (1970), with Diana Rigg as the nun.

Millar became particularly known for stage versions of the novels of C. P. Snow, of which the first, *The Affair* (1961), was probably the best. It was a tense, psychological thriller about Cambridge dons disputing whether one of their number had won his fellowship by fraud, and entertaining audiences with the closely argued and literate dialogue of the High Table. The last of four Snow adaptations, *A Coat of Varnish* (1982), was a somewhat didactic play for our times about the need and greed for money and an English middle class under threat from violence. Here, however, Millar betrayed his besetting weakness for a moral, a laugh and a thrilling curtain-line.

Millar was not a member of the Conservative Party nor even particularly interested in politics — when at a dinner in 1968 he complained to the Tories' publicity director, Geoffrey Tucker, about the quality of its press material. Tucker challenged him to submit suggestions and drafts for speeches. Millar did some radio scripts for the party, but was never on friendly terms with Edward Heath. Millar had actually voted Labour in 1964, and during the 1970 general election he gave a radio talk as a disillusioned Labour voter, assailing Harold Wilson as "the man who was always wrong".

When she became Conservative leader Margaret Thatcher was suspicious of Millar. But when he suggested using a phrase of Presi-



ent Lincoln's — that governments do not make the poor richer by making the rich poorer — she produced it from her handbag a piece of paper with the identical quotation. The relationship soon ripened, and Millar quickly became a trusted confidant, both loyal and discreet. Though primarily a writer, his political strength of mind, during the miners' strike and other crises of her Governments, made itself felt on policy, too.

As a bachelor, Millar could be summoned at short notice to Downing Street or Chequers to help with speeches. During reshuffles Mrs Thatcher was sometimes at a loss for a suitable appointment at junior level, and occasionally asked his advice, even though he was scathing about some of the ministers she clung to. "It's all about casting," he would say, and one politician whose claims to

Cabinet preferment he especially advanced was Chris Patten.

Mrs Thatcher was not a natural orator or phrase-maker. Her party conference speech in 1975 was an attempt to reunite the party after her overthrow of Heath. She wrote it herself. It ran to 60 pages and was, according to Millar, "awful". He and Patten helped to rescue it.

In Central Office on the morning of May 4, 1979, when it was clear that she would shortly be going to the Palace to become Prime Minister, she asked Millar if he had something suitable for her to say to the world's media. He did, but refused to tell her until her majority was assured. When it was, he took her to a quiet room and a secretary (later Lady Wakeham) typed out the lines attributed to St Francis, beginning "Where there is discord, may we bring harmony".

One participant compared later

all-night speechwriting sessions with her to a spell in the salt mines. Often she was plagued by self-doubt. "But is it me?" she would ask Millar.

He became her guide in fraught moments, such as the night before her 1975 party conference speech. How should she acknowledge the defeated and still embittered Ted Heath in her first conference speech as leader? Again, how could she reassure the faithful only hours after the Brighton bombings in 1984? He had been in her suite mere minutes before the bomb exploded.

The year before at Blackpool she had asked what last-minute revision she should make to her praise of Cecil Parkinson, the architect of the 1983 general election victory, when he departed in disgrace amid revelations by his former mistress, Sara Keays. Millar suggested that Parkinson be briefly mentioned at

the beginning of the speech. Only then would the audience attend to the rest. His advice was followed. Over the years Millar dismissed the many entreaties from newspaper editors and publishers to spill some of the beans ("not the right thing, old boy"). He agreed to write his memoirs only when it was clear that Baroness Thatcher was going to publish hers. His amusing *A View from the Wings* was published in 1993, with impish humour winning out over Millar's solemn exterior.

Only once did she turn on him: when *The Times* carried a post-election exclusive in 1987 about the rows in the party over advertising. Millar had been a link between No 10 and the advertising company Young & Rubicam. She was furious and virtually accused him of leaking the story. He was outraged and it was the only occasion when he thought of taking his leave.

Millar was one of the best friends Mrs Thatcher had. Yet his gentleness and self-deprecating humour made him a stark contrast to her. John Major was more like him, but he was surprised and reluctant to be recalled as a speechwriter under the new Prime Minister. Chris Patten persuaded him.

With Major, too, he usually spent the morning of the final conference day advising on the leader's speech. The 1993 conference at Blackpool was particularly difficult. Many commentators claimed that John Major's political life was at stake and that he needed to make the speech of his life. Millar found the Prime Minister alone in his room in deep depression, borne down by press criticism and the open disloyalty of colleagues.

Major complained about the amount of attention that Lady Thatcher had received — she had upstaged him for the third party conference in a row — and expressed his doubts about carrying on. For 2½ hours there was no discussion of the speech, as Millar struggled to restore his confidence. Millar had dealt with people with first-night nerves before but had never encountered such a crisis as this. The speech was a success.

Ronald Millar was hurt when some of his old Thatcherite friends criticised his support for Major. He remained a friend of Lady Thatcher and her husband, but was dismayed at what he regarded as the self-seeking and mischievous behaviour of some of her courtiers. In time, his dismay extended to Lady Thatcher herself as she turned on her successor.

Yet it is as her speechwriter that he had his greatest impact. During the early performances of his plays, Millar used to sit in the audience and rewrite lines that did not work. As a speechwriter he believed that his secret was an understanding of the audience, rather than his ability as a writer. "It has to work as theatre," he often reminded Thatcher. But he also understood the person he affectionately called "Madam", and as a dramatist and screenwriter he was used to putting words into other mouths.

Sir Ronald (he was knighted in 1980) regarded Mrs Thatcher as a star and wrote star parts for her. A good friend said, "She is the only woman in his life", but that was not the case. He had many female friends and the relationships were not always platonic. A reviewer of his memoirs fastened on Millar's coy descriptions of advances from Ivor Novello and Sir Terence Rattigan, but the insinuation that Millar was homosexual outraged his girlfriends. Millar loved women but never married, claiming that his ambition to be successful in the theatre took precedence. He was a caring and careful godfather, who communicated his love of food and wine at the Ritz.

He twice thought of an elected political career. In 1945 the Conservative MP and *Evening Standard* drama critic Beverley Baxter was so impressed by the young playwright's feel for politics in his first play, *Zero Hour*, that he promised to arrange a safe Tory seat for him. But nothing came of this. In 1979 Millar was again encouraged to think of a seat. The advice of his good friend Chris Patten was to forget it — "you would hate it".

POL POT

Pol Pot, leader of the Khmer Rouge and dictator of Cambodia, 1975-78, died on April 15. He was believed to be in his seventies.

Pol Pot was one of the most brutal and feared dictators of the century, who tried to impose extreme communist measures on Cambodia without the least regard for human life. He was the perpetrator of the 1975-79 Khmer Rouge "killing fields" in Cambodia which left more than a million people dead either through widespread executions or through starvation, disease and overwork. His futile and ill-judged policies drove his country to the bottom of the league of Third World poverty. After years of civil war, women, children and the old were all driven, often at gunpoint, into the countryside to work. Money was abolished, and a wholly inadequate system of rationing was introduced. Pol Pot was sentenced to death in absentia by a court in the

capital, Phnom Penh, soon after his overthrow by an invading Vietnamese army in 1979, but escaped justice by fleeing into the hills.

Pol Pot was born Saloth Sar in 1925 in a village in the kingdom of Cambodia, then a French Protectorate and part — like the future Vietnam — of France's Union of Indo-China. Saloth Sar's family was not part of the local élite so he was not groomed to work under the French, in Indo-China's premier secondary schools. Instead, he was sent to a Roman Catholic school in the capital, where he was among the more fringe intellectuals whose budding dissatisfaction with French colonialism was combined with antipathy to the collaborating élite.

The boy learnt that many of the French denigrated Cambodia's majority Khmer population as incapable of self-government and destined to be overwhelmed by more "dynamic races", such as the Vietnamese, whom the French were using to help them to administer the protectorate.

Pol Pot's political life began with his support for the Democrat Party, an organisation founded by graduates of the élite schools who wanted to achieve Cambodian independence non-violently, by giving the Khmer people control of the administration. Democrat politicians helped to arrange a scholarship for Pol Pot to study radio electronics in France, where he became involved with groups of Marxist students from the colonies.

In 1953 he returned to Cambodia and joined the Cambodian communist *maquis* that the Vietnamese Communists had promoted to conduct armed opposition to the French. Although the Vietnamese preached proletarian internationalism, in practice they implied that Cambodians were not capable of making revolution by themselves.

The 1954 Geneva Agreements confirmed the political predominance of the Vietnamese communist movement in the northern half of Vietnam, but forced it to withdraw from Cambodia, to which the

French had granted independence under its conservative monarch, Norodom Sihanouk. Many Cambodian Communists took refuge in Vietnam, but Pol Pot stayed behind to face Sihanouk's repression of political opposition. He joined a cell which purged the remnant Cambodian communist structure of its disillusioned members.

Two years later he took over the leadership of what Sihanouk dubbed the Khmer Rouge, and in 1964 he took refuge with Vietnamese communist forces along Cambodia's border with South Vietnam. Sihanouk kept Pol Pot's party in check not only by continuing repression, but by cultivating the friendship of China and North Vietnam as a counterweight to the United States, which he believed was plotting to subvert the kingdom. After the United States intervened massively against the communist insurgency in South Vietnam in 1965, the insurgents became reliant on supplies and sanctuaries authorised by Sihanouk. Pol

Pot became convinced that the Vietnamese cared only about their own revolution, not about helping their Cambodian comrades. In the late 1960s, against Vietnamese advice, he launched an armed uprising against Sihanouk, whose domestic policies had precluded the kind of capitalist modernisation of Cambodia that was sweeping other parts of South-East Asia.

Pol Pot's break with the Vietnamese might have been a political dead-end if Sihanouk had not been overthrown in a military coup in 1970. Instead, after the United States lent its support to the coup-makers, Vietnam, Sihanouk and China gave full backing to the fledgling insurgency created by Pol Pot, who nevertheless hid his Communist Party in complete secrecy deep behind a united front headed by Sihanouk. Vietnamese military intervention, Chinese supplies and recruiting appeals by Sihanouk gave Pol Pot the backing he needed to take advantage of the popular reaction to the authoritarianism of the American-backed military regime and the US bombing of insurgent strongholds. By 1975 this catapulted his fast-growing Communist Party and army into a position to defeat his opponents, slough off Vietnamese support and render Sihanouk politically irrelevant.

Pol Pot now proceeded to try to create an advanced communist society. Choosing eclectically from the most radical policies on offer, he took them further than anyone had previously dared. He hoped to surpass all previous revolutions by forging Cambodia's population into a mass of proletarianised and "Khmerised" peasants, while making his still covert Communist Party into a politically pure vanguard of the working class and



engendered became horribly obvious, he ordered a systematic extermination in 1977 of party members of "bourgeois" background, whom he accused of deviance.

In 1978 he launched military raids into Vietnam to try to compel it to recognise the Cambodian-Vietnamese border. This provoked devastating counterattacks, after which Pol Pot orchestrated another massive blood purge. This time he put to death most of the Communist Party's experienced peasant leaders. Towards the end of the same year he began another purification drive to kill almost all surviving party veterans, apparently believing that the whole Communist apparatus had to be replaced to create conditions for his policies to succeed. This new purge was disrupted by a Vietnamese invasion, which overthrew Pol Pot in January 1979. The Vietnamese occupied the country and put in place a new Communist regime under their tutelage. By this time, Pol Pot had

justified. But Good Friday has a unique place in the calendar. To every Christian it is a time of most solemn commemoration. To others, it can be an opportunity of showing respect for beliefs which they do not share and of remembering a historic event which, on any estimate, was also a historic tragedy.

Fortunately, the perception of these truths seems to be widening. Protests against various forms of desecration are themselves evidence of a new outlook. It is not from ecclesiastical sources only that they are heard, and apart also from specific protests there is a rising and more general dissatisfaction with a neglect of Good Friday which a few years ago was regarded as normal and inevitable. Mr. Pollock-Hill has rightly noted that the observance of Armistice Day, gaining as it has in earnestness instead of losing by the passage of time, should be a habit attuning the public mind to a commemoration yet more solemn and universal in its claim.

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ON THIS DAY

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NEWS

Westland turns to Italian rival

Westland, the Somerset company that rocked the Tory Government and took Margaret Thatcher to the brink of resignation, is set to become the world's second largest helicopter maker through a deal with Agusta, an Italian rival. The European defence alliance that was championed by Michael Heseltine in the mid-1980s but opposed by his Prime Minister is at last about to happen. The agreement will create a rival to Boeing. Page 1

Academic attacks 'childlike' Princess

A leading academic has provoked outrage and debate with the publication of an article in which he castigates Diana, Princess of Wales, for being a childlike and self-obsessed sentimentalist who had no proper understanding of her royal role. Page 1

£200m for Ulster

In a move to underpin the peace agreement, Northern Ireland is set to benefit from a £200 million aid package. Page 1

'Curb spending'

In a thinly veiled warning to the Cabinet, Gordon Brown said Labour would only achieve its aims of higher spending on health and education if it tightened up on expenditure across the board. Page 2

Britanny base

England's World Cup squad has opted for the charms of an ultra-modern hotel on Brittany's Atlantic coast. The Germans, typically, have scored with their base on the Riviera. Page 3

Pressed to go

The head of information at the Lord Chancellor's Department has been forced to quit after being blamed for a stream of bad publicity about Lord Irvine of Lairg. Page 5

Unit motorways

Uncertainty over the Government's road-building programme has suspended indefinitely plans to add lighting to 250 miles of busy motorways. Page 6

New asylum centres

The Government is to embark on an expansion of immigration and asylum detention centres after admitting that the present system is a "shambles". Page 9

Four-day holiday to toast millennium

Britons will enjoy four days off work to usher in the millennium under plans expected to be approved by Cabinet this month. Friday, December 31, 1999, will be declared a Bank Holiday under the scheme, and the standard New Year's Day holiday will be taken on Monday, January 3, 2000, because January 1 falls on a Saturday. Page 1

Hydro fuel

A US discovery that can split water into hydrogen and oxygen marks a milestone in the generation of alternative fuels to run cars. Page 7

Wife on the farm

Farmers' wives are the new agricultural entrepreneurs, diversifying into pick-your-own produce, farm shops and B&B; yet they are not being paid. Page 11

Wordsmith dies

Sir Ronald Millar, the speechwriter who spanned three Conservative eras and gave Margaret Thatcher her celebrated "the lady's not for turning" line, has died at 78. Pages 12, 20, 23

Blair the peacemaker

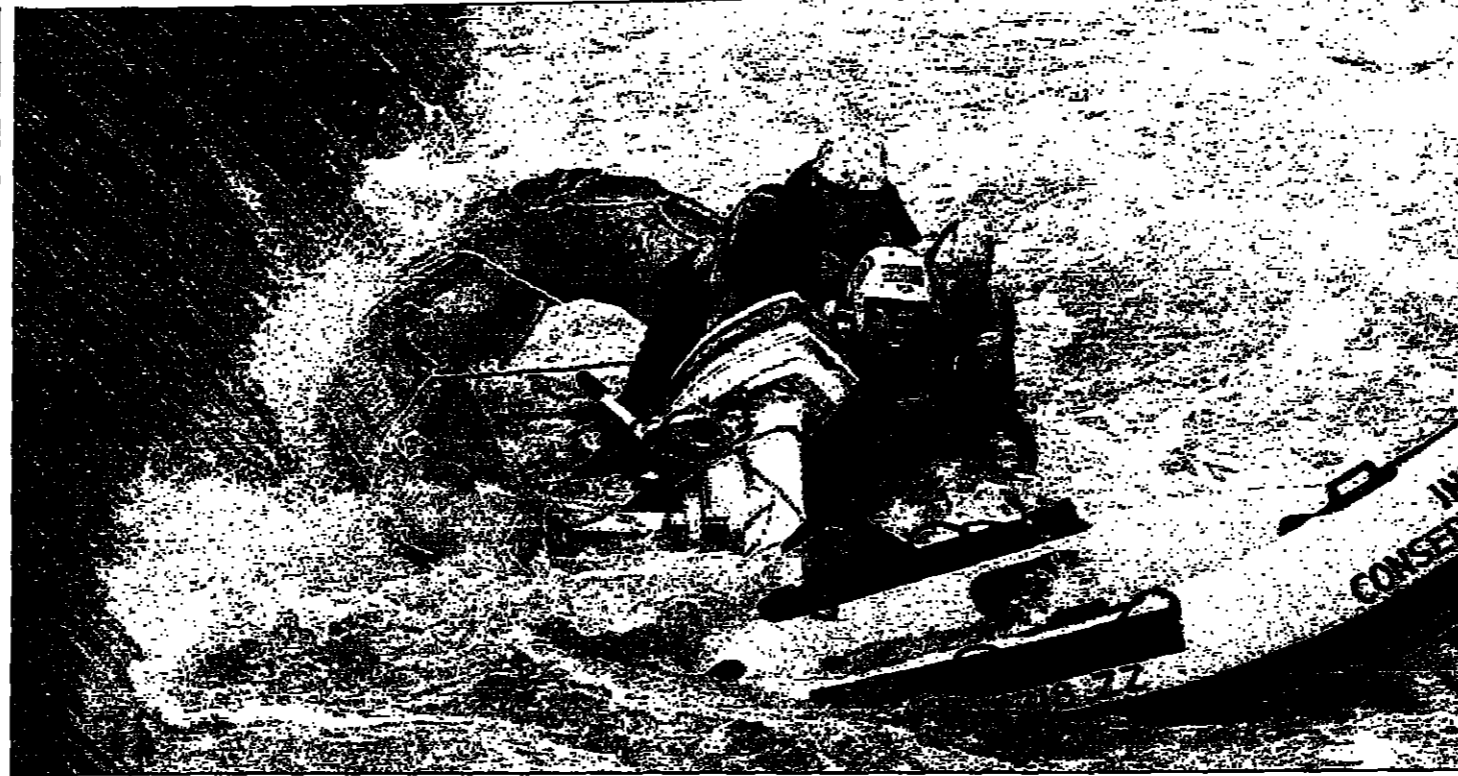
Israeli and Palestinian officials believe Tony Blair will use his success in brokering an Ulster peace framework to end the deadlock in the Middle East process. Page 15

Death of a tyrant

Fol Pot, who ushered in Year Zero and the killing fields in Cambodia, has died in a remote village near the Thai border where remnants of his Khmer Rouge force hold out. Pages 14, 21, 23

Annan's Africa recipe

UN chief Kofi Annan bluntly told Africa to stop blaming its ills on its colonial past as he pushed for economic reform and democratisation on the continent. Page 16



Three Indiana conservation officers, training in river-rescue techniques, struggle to stay afloat while searching for a colleague as their dinghies are tossed in churning waters at the base of a dam on the White River. The fourth officer was hospitalised in critical condition

BUSINESS

Pounding: The strong pound is beginning to take its toll on the previously buoyant services sector with export order books slipping to their lowest in five years. Page 25

Takeover duo: Stephen Hinchliffe and Christopher Harrison, being investigated by the SFO after the collapse of their Facia empire in 1996, are behind a £1.5 billion takeover of the Kroydard estate in Scotland. Page 25

Reverse bid: Lanica Trust, whose £1.2 billion break-up bid for Co-op ended in ignominy, is to be the subject of a reverse takeover by City Gourmets. Page 25

Markets: The FTSE 100 fell 72.1 points to close at 6002.0. Sterling rose to 108.1 after a rise to \$1.6926 and to DM3.0592. Page 28

SPORT

Football: It only takes a few minutes in Alex Ferguson's office to see that his passions still rage. Oliver Holt writes in the first of a two-part interview. Page 46

Cricket: The most attractive game in the county championship's opening round is between Kent, runners-up last year, and Middlesex, now coached by the Australian John Buchanan. Page 42

Snooker: Fred Davis, world champion eight times and younger brother of Joe Davis, has died aged 84. He was also a world champion at billiards. Page 48

Racing: The French-trained Xaar came from last to first to win the City Index Craven Stakes and remains a short-priced favourite for the 2,000 Guineas. Page 43

ARTS

Live dangerously: 'The cultural industry has no space for the instant spark of brilliance that demands attention now' - Richard Morrison wants a bit more risk-taking. Page 33

Great Tate: Sir Dennis Stevenson, the chairman of the Tate, on the gallery's visionary 21st-century Bankside building, and why he is retiring from the job. Page 33

Pop 1: The two Falkirk lads who make up Arab Strap tell Caitlin Moran about life, pubs, sex, and the small-town tales that have inspired their new album. Page 34

Pop 2: With the royalties still rolling in from his days with Police, the band's former guitarist Andy Summers has moved on to front his own jazz trio. Page 35

FEATURES

New Draw: Drew Barrymore, former child star, former addict and still only 22, talks about losing her bad-girl image. Page 19

Rude boy: The Mayor of New York wants his citizens to be more polite. Joe Joseph suggests that London should become ruder. Page 19

Pedal power: Thanks to Yves Saint Laurent, pedal-pushers are making a welcome return. Page 18

No case to answer: Alan Rusbridger, Editor of The Guardian, replies to accusations that he hounded Jonathan Aitken over the libel case. Page 39

Must try harder: As plans proceed for another relaunch of The Observer in September, its former Editor Jonathan Fenby analyses a history of false dawns. Page 39

Great escapes: What choices face those wanting to leave teaching, and what skills will they need to succeed? Page 40

The step taken by the Czechs (in joining Nato after a majority in parliament where the only opposition was from old communists and republicans) marks the start of a new era for security in Europe - La Vanguardia, Barcelona

TV AND RADIO

Preview: A new series turns conventional garden wisdom on its head (Wild About the Garden, CA, 8pm). Review: Paul Hoggart is disturbed by the first of two documentaries about women suffering domestic violence. Pages 46, 47

OPINION

No turning back

The 860 Ulster Unionist delegates who meet on Saturday will find in the agreement a Gladstone bag of bitter pills to swallow. Page 21

Back to the ballot box

Local government may remain as Macmillan described it when he was the relevant minister: "A poor thing but mine own". Page 21

Cheating life

It does seem as though the world is finally rid of the butcher of the killing fields. Page 21

COLUMNS

MATTHEW PARRIS

I think that some kinds of political leadership are rather like surfing. In the end, the surfer-politician is not the master: he is the plaything of big forces which he has learnt to ride, cannot alter and dare not cross. Page 20

JOHN LLOYD

Our political parties are in danger of becoming rich men's trumps because they are becoming more and more dependent on their money. Labour has a chance to rattle the notes they blow. But it will mean bucking a trend, upsetting new friends and placing the party's funding at risk. Page 20

PETER STOTHARD

For two thousand years the speechwriter has been an unfashionable necessity for those in public life. Sir Ronald Millar was the most influential political speechwriter of his time. He wrote powerful words for three Prime Ministers and particularly famous phrases for Margaret Thatcher. Page 20

OBITUARIES

Sir Ronald Millar, playwright and political speechwriter: Po! Pot, leader of the Khmer Rouge and dictator of Cambodia. Page 23

LETTERS

Ulster agreement: Peter Tatchell on Canterbury protest; rural Britain's new deal; nuclear energy; whistleblowing; conduct unbecoming; Berlin lesson. Page 21



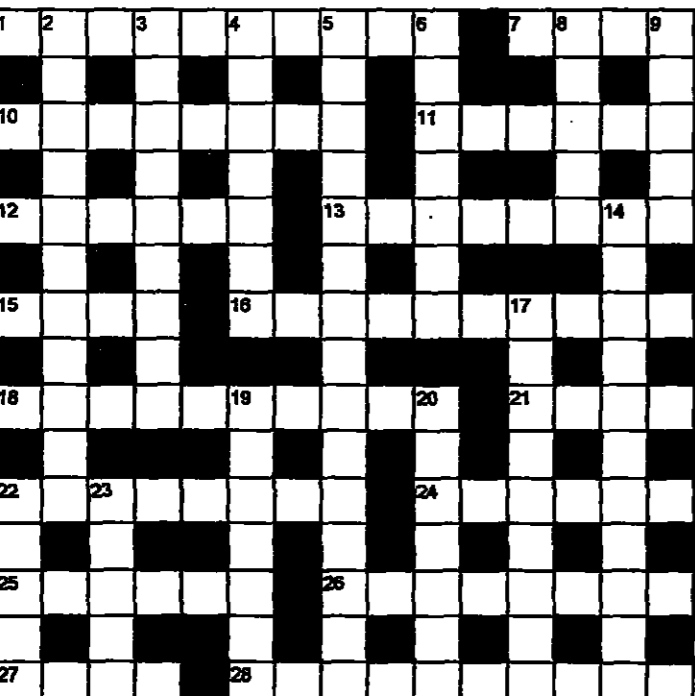
TOMORROW

IN THE SATURDAY TIMES

VISION What's on TV and radio this week, including Stressed-Eric (left)

MURDER, THEY WRITE A 20-page extra on 100 masters of crime fiction

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,768



ACROSS
1 It's possible pips may be found here (2,3,5).
7 Sport little woman takes up initially under duress (4).
10 Repairman aboard for difficult tasks (8).
11 Bill's left, that's clear (6).
12 Loaf used by a bachelor, very excited (6).
13 Quote ancients could provide (8).
15 Bismarck, for one, losing money in gambling (4).
16 Brown horse carries soldiers (or equivalent) (10).
18 Not hung up, and out of trouble (3,3,4).
21 Active agent secures opening in rep (4).
22 Rather thin ale brewed around that place (8).
24 Conduct that's dreadful, extremely corrupt (6).
25 Snake half hypnotically moved about (6).
26 Violinist must acknowledge applause (4,1,3).
27 Up to no good after end of shift (4).
28 Oversleep, say, and be late for public appearance (3,2,5).
DOWN
2 No way to fit boat in after it's been rebuilt (3,1,3,2,2).
3 Wait as Jack goes into haunt (4,5).
4 Allow people in after Conservative, Winston's successor (7).
5 Gamble on finding chamber empty (7,8).
6 Wander around idly and drink port (7).
8 Voice-face giving you, by the sound of it, quite a shock (1-4).
9 'Way-out' really covers it (5).
14 Withdraw from game, having been stumped, perhaps (8,3).
17 Noticing vest, bra on models (9).
19 Endless rambling tale about English sailors (7).
20 Child's family hide (7).
22 With cross in record, written up as living abroad (5).
23 Attention-seeker's call on telephone in accommodation (5).
Solution to Puzzle No 20767
HUMBURG MARGRITTE
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A U G R A T O F F S E T
N U I H E M I
C A S H A B E A L T A I A
T A A R E N E
E H E A P I N G S I T
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E L A P S E U N T A U G H T
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HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday: Highest day temp: Jersey, 11C (52F); lowest day temp: Chertsey, 4C (39F); Highest rainfall: Exeter, Northampton, 0.56in; Highest sunshine: Leeds Weather Centre, 12 hrs.

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING

Recycled paper made up 41.4% of the ton material for UK newspapers in the first half of 1997

Catch Swainson's pretty bird, be as much by 9 a.m. shaking

off late starters, doing business wise they're still suspended. We're really the last to return. Longer business days can mean shorter business trips.

Advertisement for Swissair featuring a logo and the text 'Swissair'.

FORECAST

General: The wintry weather is coming to an end, although the eastern highlands in Scotland will see a little more snow, and it will still be cool in all parts. Eastern Scotland and eastern England will be cloudy with showery outbreaks but the rain will peter out in southeast England during the afternoon. Northern Ireland, Wales and western parts of England and Scotland will have sunny spells and scattered showers.

Tonight any remaining showers in east will move away to leave most areas dry with broken cloud and clear periods. However, showers will fall on some northwest coasts, and there may be a frost in central areas.

London, SE England, E Anglia, E Midlands: dull morning with outbreaks of rain, but brighter weather will edge slowly east this afternoon. Fresh northerly wind. Max 10C (50F).

Central S&N, E, NE England, W Midlands: cloudy with showers, but sunny spells this afternoon. Brisk northwesterly wind. Max 9C (48F).

AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

Table showing weather conditions around Britain yesterday, including temperature, wind, and cloud cover for various locations like Aberdeen, London, and Manchester.

ABROAD

Table showing weather conditions abroad, including temperature, wind, and cloud cover for various international locations like Alcala, Cologne, Madrid, and Rome.

Channel Isles, SW, NW England, S&N Wales, Lake District, Isle of Man: sunny spells and scattered showers. Brisk northwesterly wind. Max 10C (50F).

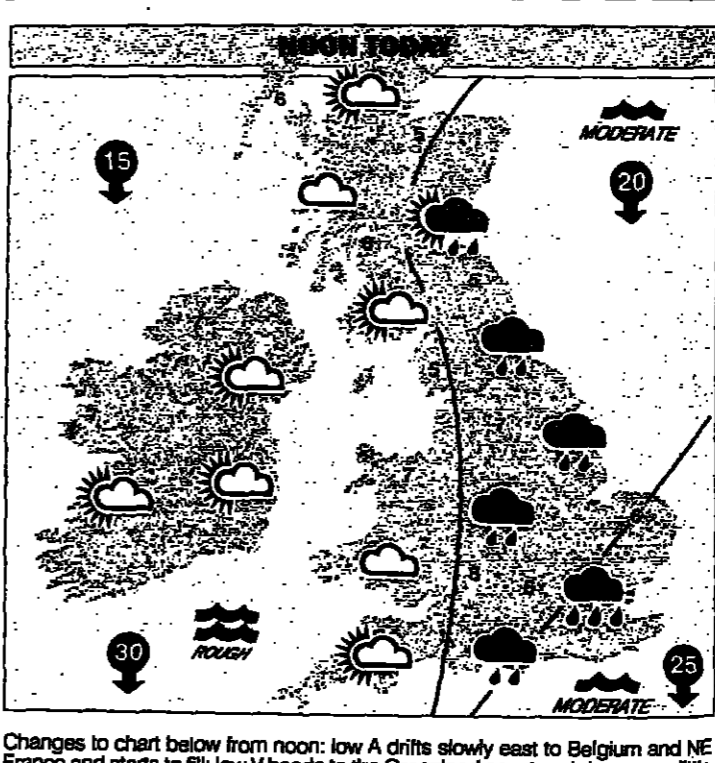
Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee, Aberdeen, Moray Firth, NE Scotland: showery outbreak, especially on coast, brighter inland. Snow only likely over high ground. Chill north to northwesterly wind. Max 9C (48F).

SW, NW Scotland, Glasgow, Cent Highlands, Argyll, N Ireland: sunny spells and scattered showers, wintry over mountains. Fresh north to northwesterly wind. Max 10C (50F).

Orkney, Shetland: cloudy and cold with occasional showers, wintry on high ground. Moderate to fresh north wind. Max temp 7C (45F).

Republic of Ireland: sunny spells but showery in northwest. Wind fresh northerly, decreasing. Max 11C (52F).

Outlook: tomorrow temperatures will start to recover with only the odd shower. Rain likely to spread from west on Sunday; northern and eastern Scotland may stay dry.



Changes to chart below from noon: low A drifts slowly east to Belgium and NE France and starts to fill; low V heads to the Greenland coast and deepens a little



TIME TABLE

Table showing train time tables for various routes, including times for departure and arrival.

HOUSE OF DARKNESS

Table showing sunset and sunrise times for various locations, including London, Edinburgh, Manchester, and Penzance.

Large advertisement for 'Steril service order' and 'Lanica the coffee reverse take' with various graphics and text.

1998

THE TIMES

INSIDE SECTION
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TODAY



ECONOMY
Anatole Kaletsky
on a bright outlook
beyond Tokyo storm
PAGE 29



ARTS
Happiness is a
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pop duo Arab Strap
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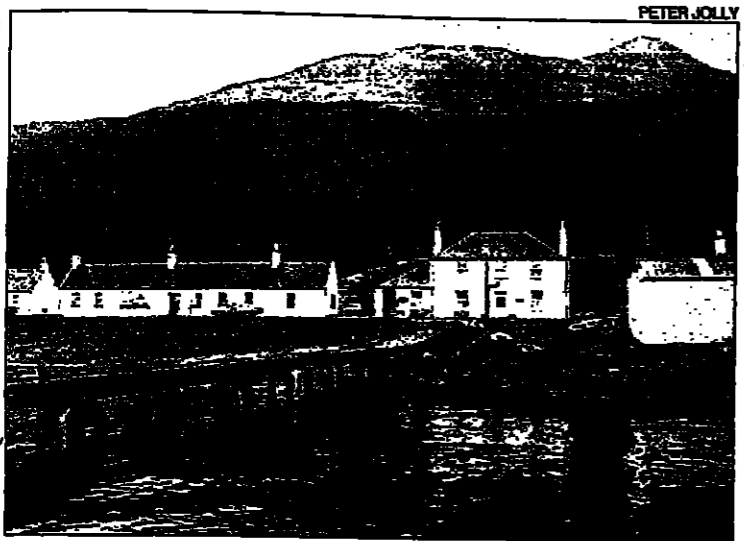
MEDIA
Why the world
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AND
RADIO
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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

FRIDAY APRIL 17 1998

RK



Hinchliffe behind Knoydart purchase

By Jason Nissé

STEPHEN HINCHLIFFE and Christopher Harrison, the businessmen being investigated by the Serious Fraud Office after the collapse of their Facia retailing empire in 1996, are behind a £1.5 million takeover of the Knoydart estate in the West of Scotland.

Hepplestone, an associate of the pair, became directors of Knoydart Peninsular, the company that owns the 16,000 acre estate, in February. The company has been owned for the last five years by Tingthor, a Dundee jute company whose shares were suspended eight years ago by the Stock Exchange.



Hinchliffe: under investigation to own Knoydart, that his companies now own the estate. Mr Rhodes is owed more than £200,000 by Knoydart Peninsular.

Tingthor has been run for more than a decade by Reg Brealey, a Sheffield businessman who, like Mr Hinchliffe, is a former director of Sheffield United Football Club. He stood aside recently in favour of Graham Avery. Mr Avery is the former chairman and chief executive of WB Industries, an engineering group. An investigation by the fraud squad into property deals by WB while Mr Avery was in charge led to the arrest of Mr Hinchliffe, though he was later released without charge.

Colourful past, page 26

Sterling hits service sector order books

By Alasdair Murray, Economics Correspondent

THE strong pound is beginning to take its toll of the previously buoyant services sector with export order books slipping to their lowest levels in five years, the British Chambers of Commerce said yesterday.

Domestic order books and business confidence also declined as companies began to lose ground to cheap imports in the UK market, the BCC's quarterly economic survey revealed.

on the foreign exchanges as speculation that German rates might rise faded. Sterling climbed three pence to DM3.0592 against the mark and its trade weighted index rose a full point to 108.1.



Jean-Pierre Garnier, who yesterday gave analysts an assessment of progress at SmithKline Beecham's clinical trials

Lanica smells the coffee in reverse takeover

By Dominic Walsh

LANICA TRUST, the quoted vehicle of Andrew Regan, whose £1.2 billion break-up bid for the Co-operative Wholesale Society ended in high-profile failure, is to be the subject of a reverse takeover by City Gourmets, the coffee bar chain.

are likely to be valued at around 100p when they are relisted. The company will be renamed City Gourmets. The coffee bar group, which recently announced plans to seek a listing on the Alternative Investment Market, confirmed yesterday that it was in talks with Lanica. A spokesman said: "We are coming to the market quite shortly, and doing something with Lanica Trust is one of the possibilities we're considering."

Further evidence of the slowing economy was provided by the cashflow figures which showed small and medium-sized businesses especially hard hit while the overall indicator recorded its lowest reading for 18 months. The number of companies expecting to raise prices also declined across both the manufacturing and service sectors.

SB happy over departure of speculators

By Paul Durman

JEAN-PIERRE GARNIER, chief operating officer of SmithKline Beecham, yesterday attributed the sharp fall in the pharmaceutical group's share price this week to a recognition by speculators that the company is not about to do a merger.

pipeline of new drugs after Pfizer. However, other analysts take the view that the hopes for products such as Avandia for insulin-resistant diabetes, Ariflo for asthma and Idoxifene for osteoporosis are insufficient to justify the recent 800p share price.



Whittaker: experience

St Michael turns pensions pioneer

By Susan Emmett

MARKS & SPENCER is considering breaking into the group personal pension (GPP) market after the success of its personal pension products. The financial arm of the high street retailer, which also offers unit trusts, personal equity plans, personal loans and life assurance, is looking at the feasibility of extending personal pensions to groups, after being approached by a number of companies requesting the

service. If M&S moves into a market that was worth about £848 million last year, it would be the first to offer GPP on an execution-only basis. Traditionally, GPP schemes have been the preserve of financial advisers. As such, M&S's proposal has been greeted with scepticism by many in the market who believe there is a strong need for advice in selling pensions.

formula that it uses for its personal pensions. M&S has sold more than 12,500 life and pensions policies since their launch in May 1995 and the group's pension fund has grown by more than 38 per cent.

need to establish whether we have the right system to support this." The retailer said that it would also be studying the highly competitive GPP market before proceeding with plans.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES	
FTSE 100	6002.0 (-72.1)
FTSE All share	2,729 (-26.96)
Nikkei	15883.77 (-415.53)
New York	9080.81 (-81.49)
Dow Jones	1108.44 (-10.88)
S&P Composite	
US RATE	
Federal Funds	5 1/4% (5 1/4%)
Long Bond	103 1/2% (103 1/2%)
Yield	5.67% (5.68%)
LONDON MONEY	
3-month interbank	7 1/4% (7 1/4%)
Libor long gdt	
Future (4m)	106 1/4 (106 1/4)
FOREIGN EXCHANGE	
New York	1.6910* (1.6855)
London	
\$	1.6924 (1.6850)
DM	3.0591 (3.0279)
FF	10.2540 (10.1530)
SF	2.5436 (2.5123)
Yen	223.03 (217.94)
E Index	108.1 (107.1)
COMMODITIES	
Oil	
Gold	
London	1.8070* (1.8015)
FF	6.0360* (6.0365)
SF	1.5052* (1.4985)
Yen	131.75* (129.95)
\$ Index	106.6 (106.5)
Tokyo close Yen	131.43
CURRENCY	
Great 15-day (Jul)	\$15.00 (nil)
London close	\$307.25 (\$307.45)

* denotes midday trading price

Unwinding

Stephen Davidson, chief executive of Telewest Communications, yesterday surprised the City by standing down as the cable group unveiled a long-awaited £649 million merger with its rival General Cable. Page 26, Tempus 28

Replacement

Premier Farnell, the electronic components distributor that parted with its chief executive three months ago, said it was making satisfactory progress in finding a replacement. Page 27, Tempus 28

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YOUR RIGHT TO FLY FOR LESS

Hinchliffe to be laird in a controversial manor

By Jason Nisse and Fraser Nelson

THE ARRIVAL on Good Friday of Christopher Harrison in Inverie, the small village on the edge of Loch Nevis where the Mallaig ferry docks, brought the prospect of a new laird for the 16,000 acre estate of Knoydart. Although Mr Harrison described himself as only a director of the Knoydart Peninsular, the company that owns the estate, locals were in no doubt that he and his long-time associate, Stephen Hinchliffe, have become the latest in the long list of colourful owners for the troubled estate.

Knoydart — sandwiched between the lochs of Nevis (meaning heaven in gaelic) and Houra (meaning hell) on Scotland's west coast — was one of the areas worst hit by the highland clearances that followed the defeat of Bonnie Prince Charlie at the Battle of Culloden in 1746. Resentment festered between the locals and Knoydart's owners, reaching boiling point shortly after the Second World War. The then owner was Lord Brockett who, like the current lord — his grandson — was imprisoned, though for Nazi sympathies, not fraud. When the Government returned the land to Brockett in 1948, rebels led by the Seven Men of Knoydart

launched a land-raid and split the estate between them. Their rebellion failed, but Brockett became an absentee landlord. He sold out in the 1950s and the estate passed through a number of hands — including Major Nigel Chamberlayne-Macdonald and Lord Hesketh, the Conservative whip in the Lords — until it was purchased by Tiaghur, a Dundee jute company, in 1993 for £1.7 million. Reg Brealey, chairman of Tiaghur, had plans to turn the estate into an adventure holiday resort. A former member of the General Synod of the Church of England and chairman of Sheffield United Football Club,

Mr Brealey saw his company's shares suspended in 1990 after an insider-dealing inquiry that ultimately cleared him. His plan came to naught with bills left unpaid. Tiaghur put the estate up for sale, but rejected a host of offers. Mr Brealey's rule ended earlier this year when he ceded control of Tiaghur to Graham Avery. Mr Avery's WB Industries was investigated by the fraud squad at the end of the 1980s but no charges were brought. Mr Avery appeared at Knoydart in February assuring the locals of its future. By then he had already struck the deal to sell the estate to the new lairds of Knoydart.

Telewest's chief quits as merger is unveiled

By Chris Ayres

STEPHEN DAVIDSON, chief executive of Telewest Communications, yesterday surprised the City by standing down as the cable group unveiled a long-awaited £649 million merger with its rival General Cable.

Since Mr Davidson joined the company five years ago, it has undergone a radical restructuring. Its share price has divined from 195p in 1995 to just 63p last year. Yesterday, shares fell 3 1/2p to 85 1/2p.

Mr Davidson is understood to have been employed on a one-year contract with a £35,000 basic salary. He is likely to receive one year's salary as a payoff, although Telewest yesterday emphasised that he had resigned of his own accord. Charles Burdick, finance director of Telewest, said: "He felt it was time to go and do other things."

One City insider yesterday described Mr Davidson as "a good guy who got a bad press" although some analysts were less flattering. He will be replaced temporarily by David Van Valkenburg, currently chief operating officer of Telewest, as the company searches for a replacement.

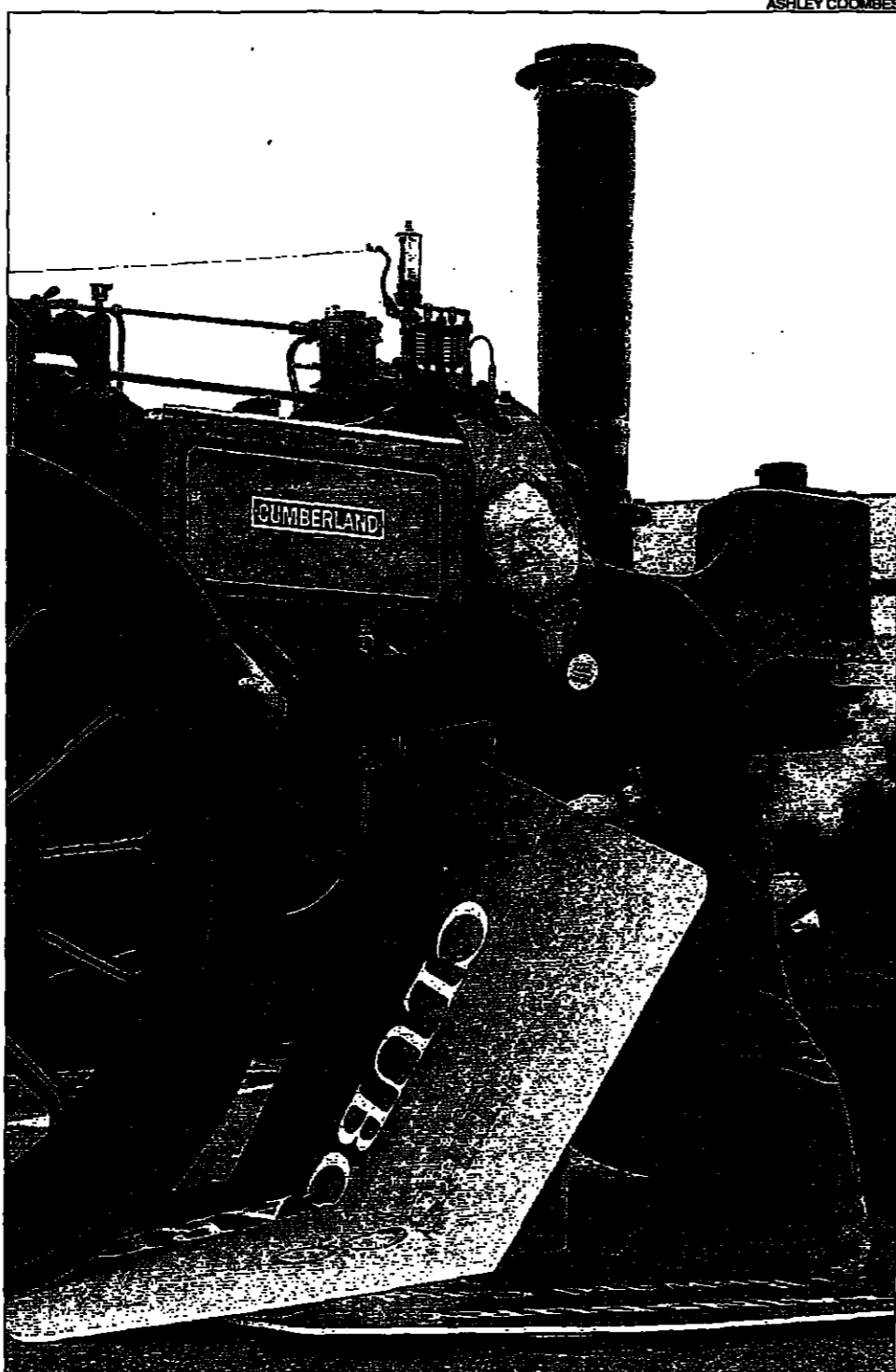
The board of the merged company has not yet been decided, although Gary Ames,

present chairman of US West International, will become chairman. He said yesterday: "We believe that the combined group will be better positioned to take advantage of new product development and growth opportunities such as digital television and internet access in a period of accelerating technological change."

The company added that it did not rule out further consolidation of the cable market, and said that it was still in a position to make acquisitions. It said none were currently planned. Telewest and General Cable revealed last month that they were in the advanced stages of merger discussions.

Both General Cable and Générale des Eaux, the French group which owns 40 per cent of the cable company, gave Telewest until April 15 to come up with a bid. It later emerged that NTL had also made an offer for General Cable and that CWC had expressed an interest. Details of their discussions with the company have not been made public.

The merger represents a major shake-up of the cable industry, with the expanded group emerging as the UK market leader. It has interests in 43 franchises covering about 5.8 million homes.



Colin Smith, of Safeway, is hoping to steamroller over his competitors' loyalty cards

Safeway steps up loyalty card war

By Fraser Nelson

SAFEBAY, the struggling supermarket chain, will next month attempt to buy back lost shoppers by giving away £20 million worth of bonus points through its ABC loyalty cards.

In an attempt to prize customers from Asda, Tesco and J Sainsbury, the supermarket is offering double bonus points to those who spend £160 a month and triple points to those who spend more than £240 a month.

Safeway is seen as the loser in the loyalty card wars, which erupted in 1995.

The move met a cool reception by the City yesterday and Safeway shares held at 364p. One analyst said: "Safeway's problems are far deeper-rooted, and it's not going to solve them by giving away a few more loyalty points."

Roger Ramsden, head of the loyalty card division, said that although Safeway had seven million ABC cards in issue, 2.5 million were hardly used at all.

The increased loyalty card discount scheme comes three months after Colin Smith, chief executive of Safeway, admitted to the City that the company would have to sacrifice profitability to remain independent.

Since Mr Smith broke off takeover talks with Asda last autumn, Safeway's share price has been held up by hope that another merger would soon emerge.

Shoppers who use their ABC cards in April will be able to claim their enhanced bonus points on everything but petrol from May 1.

That card swapping ritual is so passé.

Who hasn't been there when someone's started dealing business cards as if it were a game of five card stud? The Palm III[™] connected organizer lets you dispense with that ritual - without gambling with your precious information. Now infrared transfer makes it possible to transfer your business card and other information (including applications) directly to and from other Palm III users. And HotSync[™] technology lets you exchange data with your PC - great for quick backups and seamless data entry. Of course Palm III still keeps track of appointments, contacts, to-do lists, e-mail and expenses - and applications created by thousands of developers make this organizer even more powerful. Palm[™] products are the fastest selling computer products in history and soon not having one will be like running out of business cards - a big business faux pas. For a Palm III retailer near you, visit www.palm-europe.com or call 0800-731-1064.

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Dixons
WORLD-WIDE LAUNCH OF PALM III

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Alstom to lose £1bn before float

By Carl Mortished, International Business Editor

GEC Alstom is to be stripped of its £1 billion cash mountain before flotation in June as GEC and Alcatel, its parents, secure funds to pursue their own expansion strategies.

The main beneficiary will be Alcatel, the French company, which will receive 520 million ecu (£340 million) in net payment for the sale to GEC Alstom of Cegelec, the electrical contractor. In addition, the two companies plan to share a 1.2 billion ecu special dividend drawn on the rail and power generating equipment company.

The terms of the Cegelec deal, which were revealed this week to a private meeting of City analysts, take account of the electrical company's liquid balance sheet, which is believed to include net cash amounting to 1.4 billion ecu.

Cegelec generates little profit, producing an operating margin of just 73 million ecu on 3 billion ecu in sales. However, GEC Alstom told its audience yesterday that it expects to generate an extra 100 million ecu in annual profit from Cegelec by 2002, raising the company's margin to the group level of 6 per cent.

State 'told Yamaichi to hide losses'

By Graham Serajeant, Financial Editor

YAMAICHI Securities, the collapsed Japanese broking house, has claimed that a top official at the Ministry of Finance (MoF) fatally advised it to hide losses, which mounted to £900 million in an offshore company.

The report of an internal investigation at Yamaichi says that its top managers sought advice on the losses in 1992. Until then they had avoided disclosure by window dressing, shuffling what were then losses of £550 million around companies with different accounting dates.

The report, prepared by Takamasa Kamoto, former managing director, claims that Nobuhiko Matsuno, then head of the MoF's securities bureau, advised that rival Daiwa hid such losses overseas and congratulated Yamaichi for a job well done when it later reported that it had done the same.

Mr Matsuno, now vice-chairman of the Regional Banks Association of Japan, denied at a parliamentary session in March that he had instructed Yamaichi to hide the losses.

Commentary, page 27

Investors poised to sell 42.5% holding in Aegis

By Chris Ayres

TWO venture capital firms and a family group of private investors yesterday indicated that they would sell about £280 million worth of shares in Aegis, the advertising and marketing company.

Warburg, Pincus, Electra Private Equity Partners and the Gross family of France — who received a 9 per cent stake in the company as part payment for the acquisition of Carat Espace ten years ago — will sell a total of about 353 million shares. The total number of shares up for sale has been estimated at about 42.5

per cent of the restructured media group's equity. If one company decided to buy the shares it would be forced, under stock exchange rules, to make a takeover bid for Aegis. However, the shares are expected to be sold to various financial institutions.

Crispin Davis, chief executive of Aegis, said yesterday: "Now that the repositioning of the group is fully behind us, I welcome the opportunity significantly to widen our shareholder base."

The offer price and exact number of shares for sale will

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

BSkyB issues writ in set-top box battle

THE increasingly bitter battle between digital broadcasters intensified yesterday when BSKyB confirmed that it had issued, but not served, a writ against BDB, its terrestrial rival. BSKyB said it was concerned the set-top boxes needed to unscramble BDB's pictures would be incompatible with those provided by BSKyB, which is 40 per cent owned by News International, parent company of The Times. However, BDB, a joint venture between Carlton Communications and Granada Group, yesterday argued that all BSKyB's services would be available using its set-top boxes apart from some parts of its electronic programme guide.

Mark Booth, chief executive of BSKyB, said: "BDB is now prepared to talk and we have a meeting scheduled for today. This will help to ensure that customers can purchase new digital technology without concern about upgrades or changes in service providers. That is what our agreement with BDB stipulated and that is what we are trying to achieve."

Faupel shares in retreat

SHARES in Faupel Trading Group fell 4p to 36p yesterday after the textile importer warned investors profits in the year to March 31 would be little changed from the previous 12 months, when the company earned £720,000 before tax. The total dividend is likely to be unchanged. The City had anticipated profits of £1 million. Iain Brown, chief executive, said the company had been hit by weak trading conditions in March. He said he could see no long-term problems.

Italian banks in talks

CREDITO ITALIANO is negotiating a merger with the unquoted Unicredito group that would create Italy's most profitable bank with nearly 2,700 branches. Shares in the Milan-based bank, which would have 60 per cent of the enlarged group, were suspended for an hour after jumping more than 10 per cent. Unicredito is a grouping of three savings banks. The talks came as a surprise as Credito Italiano was thought more likely to link with Banco di Roma or Banco Nazionale del Lavoro.

Warning for Lloyd's

THE Lloyd's insurance market is fast losing market share to global insurance groups, and must act "quickly and decisively" to reverse the slide, Ron Sandler, the Lloyd's chief executive, said yesterday. He told the spring conference of the Association of Lloyd's Members (ALM) that insurers such as Munich re, Axa, Generali and Commercial Union/General Accident were using economies of scale to drive down their cost base. Lloyd's was unable to compete on cost.

Caverdale setback

CAVERDALE the distributor of cycle, motorcycle and marine equipment, yesterday reported a 20 per cent fall in 1997 pre-tax profits to £4.3 million on turnover up 1 per cent to £251.5 million. The group, which recently acquired Crabtree, a wholesale distributor of Raleigh bicycles, saw a 3 per cent fall in earnings to 15p a share. A final dividend of 2.2p a share lifts the total 11 per cent to 4p. During the year Caverdale sold its motor retailing activities to Quicks for £46.1 million.

IEG advances 33%

INTERNATIONAL ENERGY GROUP, the gas production and distribution company, lifted pre-tax profits 33 per cent to £7.34 million in 1997, with the first full-year contribution from acquisitions in the Isle of Man and Portugal. Earnings were up 29 per cent, at 10.68p a share. The total dividend is lifted to 4.7p (4.45p), with a 3.2p final. The company said contracts were now in place to install gas mains and to connect natural gas to more than 26,000 new houses being built in the UK.

Delay for BP plant

INDONESIA'S economic woes have caused the postponement of the construction of a \$1 billion (£560 million) petrochemicals plant by a consortium led by BP Chemicals. The plant, in West Java, was due to enter production by 2000, but has been delayed because of the difficulty of raising finance for the project. Jim Hay, BP Chemicals' director of chemicals development in Indonesia, said he was confident that the plant could enter production in 2001.

De La Rue Italian buy

DE LA RUE, the cash and cards manufacturer, yesterday announced plans to acquire Cellograf, the leading Italian producer of plastic cards, for £6.7 million. The acquisition of Cellograf, which has a market share of more than 60 per cent in Italy, forms part of De La Rue's plans to expand its smart card market in Southern Europe. Based in Milan and employing more than 130 people, the company reported sales revenues of £7.8 million in the year to March 31 1997.

Barbican recovery

BARBICAN HEALTHCARE, the AIM-listed private medical group, recovered to a pre-tax profit of £120.311 in the year to December 31 from a loss of £50.359 in the previous year on sales up from £1.7 million to £3.9 million. Earnings per share reached 0.62p, a recovery from the previous losses of 0.30p. Once again, there is no dividend. John Beckwith, chairman, said: "There is the real opportunity to build this business substantially both through organic growth and acquisition."

Energy bid extension

THE Takeover Panel has extended the offer timetable on the bids for Energy Group. The extension was given because the OFT has yet to decide whether the 840p-a-share bid from Texas Utilities should be referred. Pacificorp, of the US, has offered 820p. Energy Group must now publish relevant financial details by the second day after the decision is announced on whether there will be a referral. Other deadlines will be similarly extended.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia \$	2.70	2.52
Austria Sch	22.90	20.80
Belgium Fr	66.10	61.20
Canada \$	2.565	2.367
Cyprus Cyp	0.936	0.892
Denmark Kr	12.25	11.38
Finland Mk	6.83	6.53
France Fr	16.72	15.68
Germany DM	3.22	2.98
Greece Dr	507	518
Hong Kong \$	13.93	12.75
India Ru	153	113
Ireland Pt	1.27	1.18
Israel Sh	6.98	6.00
Italy Lit	319	295
Japan Yen	297.89	220.16
Malta	0.698	0.579
Netherlands Gld	3.632	3.33
New Zealand \$	3.20	2.95
Norway Kr	13.31	12.37
Portugal Esc	325.89	305.00
S Africa Rd	8.23	7.55
Spain Pt	271.16	252.07
Sweden Kr	13.93	12.15
Switzerland Fr	2.70	2.49
Turkey Lira	421484	401925
USA \$	1.790	1.654

Rates for small denomination banknotes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

Safeway plays the loyalty card

Safeway's latest attempt to woo customers is being billed at a mere £20 million but it could prove considerably more costly to its rivals if they try to retaliate.

Tired of being the underdog in the sector, Safeway's chief executive, Colin Smith, has turned aggressive. At the time of the last profits warning, he took the opportunity to stash away some comforting provisions in the kennel and they will now cushion the cost of his apparent give-away. But should the other major grocers feel sufficiently threatened that they have to match the terms of his offer, the hit will be felt on the bottom line and the likelihood is that J Sainsbury would feel it hardest.

The loyalty card is now firmly established as an offensive weapon in retailing, with Asda alone among the big four supermarket businesses in eschewing the attempt to tie in customers with bits of plastic. Yet the tactic can prove expensive. When Sainsbury launched its Reward Card with the intention of regaining the market leadership it had lost to Tesco, the results were not wholeheartedly encouraging.

The card made its debut in June 1996 and Sainsbury was soon shovelling out extra Reward points in special promotions. Shoppers, alas, were quick and canny in claiming their rewards: by the year end, the company was able to report that its market share was indeed up, from 12.5 to

12.6 per cent. Operating profits, however, were down by 11.1 per cent.

Since then, Sainsbury has curtailed its over-generosity and reclaimed some of its former profitability but not the market leadership, where Tesco remains convincingly in command. Now it will have to decide whether it can risk allowing Safeway to erode its position.

The new Safeway promotion is carefully structured to persuade customers to spend more — and more — on each shopping trip. Colin Smith needs the custom of those who will overload a trolley rather than put a few items in a basket and he must lure them away from Tesco and Sainsbury.

Smith is fighting from a position of extreme vulnerability, only hinted at by the warning that profits for the current year will be down from £430 million to around £375 million. The strangely aborted merger talks with Asda were far greater an indication of the problems within the group. Once Sir Alistair Grant left the helm, the effects of a lack of investment in such basics as the supply chain and the store portfolio erupted on the unfortunate Smith.

His latest marketing play may

not be enough to compensate for the deep seated problems and many in the industry suspect that a deal with Asda may yet emerge, looking less like a merger and more like a takeover. But tipping the rewards for loyalty could force the larger rivals into extra costs of well over £30 million a year.

That would be tough for Tesco, but harder still on a Sainsbury struggling to recover its profits poise.

New brew for Regan's Lania

More than 14 months after its shares were suspended by the Stock Exchange, it seems that Lania may be about to be brought back from limbo. The return will be far from comfortable for some of the overly optimistic investors who helped to drive up the price of a company that was little more

COMMENTARY

by our City Editor

than a shell vehicle fuelled by the ambitions of the youthful Andrew Regan. Some paid £19 and more for a Lania share but they will be lucky to see more than £1 apiece as the recompense for exiting the sorry saga.

Far from the dreamed of excitement of releasing the potential buried in the Co-operative movement with its planned £500 million takeover bid, Lania is to provide a cheap route to the stock market for a chain of coffee shops. By the end of the month, Lania Trust will be reincarnated as City Gourmets. Considering the distaste which Lania's activities occasioned in the Square Mile, spiced with corporate finance tactics which tarnished the reputation of Hambros and a brace of its executives, there is a certain piquancy about the name change.

There is also a neat parallel in the fact that City Gourmets is also the brainchild of ambitious youth. But Simon Brookes and his partner have their dreams

tapered by reality. They are starting small, and are intent on putting in place a stable structure before embarking on plans to emulate the success of the US stock market coffee craze, Starbucks.

Andrew Regan wanted to fly too high too soon and a descent of Icarus-like speed was almost inevitable. Investors should have seen the lunacy of bidding up to £82 million a business with assets put at little more than £3 million.

Mr Regan emerges from the debacle rather less scathed than some of his backers and determined still to demonstrate that he can do deals. The Co-op may have to wait but he is believed to be negotiating to buy out of Lania the remnants of a wholesaling business for which, no doubt, he has grand plans.

His ideas may be worth nurturing — the Co-op was certainly a worthy target for a properly equipped attacker. But

his future success may depend on harnessing his youthful enthusiasm to someone else's experience. That is what City Gourmets aims to achieve in bringing in Kingfisher veteran Nigel Whitaker as chairman. Marathon runner Whitaker knows the importance of striking the right pace and going for long-term success.

Vertical lift for defence deals

Forget grand statements by Tony Blair and Lionel Jospin and even more grandiose plans to rationalise Europe's defence industries. As GKN seeks to show, there is another, much more practical way to achieve alignments that owe more to business sense than to politics. Westland and Italy's inventive Agusta have often been partners over the years, most recently in the key EH 101 range. They form the most natural link, one that pushes governments back to the role of customer.

Twelve years on, it is inconceivable that the British Cabinet could be strained to breaking point over the fate of Westland. And although Agusta's parent is

still state-controlled, the State is relaxed about its move into the private sector, just as Agusta played both sides in that early crisis. The next step for Westland-Agusta, then second only to Boeing in orders, would be to merge with a US group, logically United Technologies' Sikorsky.

A link with Eurocopter, the politically conceived Franco-German consortium, seems as awkward in business terms now as it would have been a dozen years ago. A connection via Agusta's participation in a multinational heavy helicopter looks usefully discreet. Beyond that, as GKN noted yesterday, they like everyone else are being put off by the French government's insistence on creating structures that it would effectively control.

Practical defence dealers, including GEC and British Aerospace, should avoid the French public sector and get on with it.

Tale out of school

THE post-mortem at Yamaichi reveals a bizarre world. Cap in hand, top bosses ask their sponsoring civil servant, effectively their regulator, how to fiddle their accounts to hide huge losses. They follow his advice dutifully and are commended like pupils for good work. Only when the Cabinet bows to Washington pressure does it unravel. Don't laugh. These cynical ways worked for years, but didn't anyone see the country had to grow up?

Premier Farnell progresses in search for chief

By PAUL DURMAN

PREMIER FARNELL, the electronic components distributor that parted with its chief executive three months ago, said it was making satisfactory progress in finding a replacement for Howard Poulson.

Morton Mandel, the deputy chairman who has been acting as a stand-in, said finding a new chief executive was the company's priority. It had already compiled a "first class" list of candidates from the UK and the US. It is believed the company hopes to make an announcement in about six weeks.

The group, formed by a controversial £1.85 billion merger two years ago, was reporting annual pre-tax profits of £139 million (£137.4 million), much in line with the forecast made at the time of Mr Poulson's departure.

The main catalogue distribution business, comprising Newark Electronics and Farnell,



Poulson: replacement sought

but margins slipped from 21.1 to 20.3 per cent. This was partly blamed on marketing and launch costs of a new catalogue. Additionally, growth in Newark's US sales has mainly come from larger companies who command lower prices. Newark is increasing its sales effort on higher-margin, small-customer business.

Farnell, formerly the European core of the group, saw operating profits fall from £49 million to £41.6 million, with margins slipping from 27.4 to 23 per cent. The group blamed the cost of starting up a new industrial catalogue and of its international expansion.

Premier Farnell said trading continues in line with recent trends. Farnell's sales grew 8.7 per cent to £180.9 million last year, while Newark's rose 6.2 per cent to £52.3 million.

A final dividend of 7.2p, to be paid on July 1, lifts the total for the year by 7.5 per cent to 12.9p a share.

Tempus, page 28

First Leisure advances as suitors approach

By DOMINIC WALSH

SHARES in First Leisure gained 30p to 367p yesterday after the company confirmed that it had received "a number of unsolicited approaches" for its resorts division.

In a statement, the group said: "The board has decided to consider these approaches. However, discussions are at an early stage, no firm offer has yet been received and First Leisure is continuing actively to manage the resorts business for the long term."

The prospect of a possible disposal of the division, which includes Blackpool Tower and Eastbourne Pier and has a book value of £100 million, arose in January when Michael Grade, chairman, admitted the business was "not a core area for investment".

The group refused to be drawn on the identity of the suitors, though venture capital groups are seen as likely buyers. A sale would allow First Leisure to focus resources on its three core areas — health and fitness, bowling and bars and nightclubs.

Payout of £792,000 for former Hillsdown chief

By KATHY LIPARI

JOHN JACKSON, the former deputy chairman of Hillsdown, the food and furniture conglomerate, received a £792,000 payout after leaving the group last year.

Mr Jackson, who had been with the group for 20 years and was in charge of acquisitions and disposals, was also paid salary and benefits of £40,000, taking his total remuneration for 1997 to £832,000. The payout included £459,000 in "compensation for loss of

office", which amounted to nearly two years salary, and £333,000 in additional pension contributions.

George Greener, Hillsdown's chief executive who was paid £441,000 last year, said Mr Jackson left on perfectly amicable terms. "It was simply mutually agreed he had become interested in doing other things."

Mr Jackson helped to build up the group under Harry Solomon and then masterminded the shrinking of the group back to its food manufacturing core after Mr Solomon left.

Albert Fisher in red at half time

By DOMINIC WALSH

ALBERT FISHER, the food producer, plunged into the red at the half year as disposals resulted in exceptional charges of £35.5 million.

The company, which last summer rejected a bid approach thought to have been from Chiquita Brands, of the US, reported pre-tax losses of £22.9 million in the half year to February 28 compared with a profit last time of £19.1 million. Turnover from continuing operations rose from £575 million to £609 million.

Most of the exceptional charges related to previously written off goodwill on the sale of the Roem Group and costs from the abortive sale of the seafood division. While negotiations over the sale of its North American seafood trading arm continue, the group has decided to retain its European business.

Excluding exceptionals, pre-tax profits dipped from £19.1 million to £12.6 million. Stephen Walls, chairman,

who recently shed his executive status, said the company would shortly be strengthened by the appointment of a new non-executive director and a new divisional chief executive for seafood.

Although earnings per share before exceptionals were 1.3p (1.97p), the interim dividend, due on July 3, is maintained at 1.85p.



Walls: signalled appointments

GUS' chief takes swipe at Argos

By FRASER NELSON

LORD WOLFSON of Sunningdale, the chairman of Great Universal Stores (GUS), fired another broadside in his battle for control of Argos yesterday by accusing the catalogue retailer of hampering employee's ability to accept GUS's 650p-a-share hostile bid.

By refusing to grant credit on cashing in share options, GUS said, Argos has demanded that employees provide cash up-front — which requires a substantial bank balance. Normal practice, it said, is to lend the employee the entire amount required to activate the options, and deduct it from the value of the shares.

Lord Wolfson has promised to re-instate this credit option to staff if GUS wins its £1.9 billion bid.

Argos, however, said that its move was standard in hostile bids, adding that its employees could seek credit from high street banks.

Wace Group pulls out of UK printing operations

WACE GROUP, the beleaguered printing and imaging company, is withdrawing from UK printing operations after incurring an underlying pre-tax loss of £10.3 million in 1997 (Kathy Lipari writes). The company is selling the printing business to a management team backed by Electra Fleming for £53 million.

The disposal was announced as the company reported a total pre-tax loss of £76.4 million, including exceptional charges of £66.2 million relating to goodwill

write-offs of Wace USA, restructuring and other losses. Losses per share were 100.1p (8.4p loss). Turnover fell 17 per cent to £268.9 million.

Peter Brown, chairman, said the divestment of the printing businesses would change the group's focus to imaging and graphics, which would culminate next week with a relaunch and a new name. Mr Brown said the sale would eliminate bank debt and leave the company in a stronger financial position. Mr Brown said: "I don't

think we are seen as a basket case anymore, but we still have to prove that we can be a successful company and it will probably be 18 months before we can do that." He said it would be two to three years before the group was performing well.

The company did not declare a dividend for 1997 and Mr Brown said Wace was unlikely to be in a position to pay a dividend in 1998.

Wace shares fell 5 1/2 p to 25p.

Tempus, page 28

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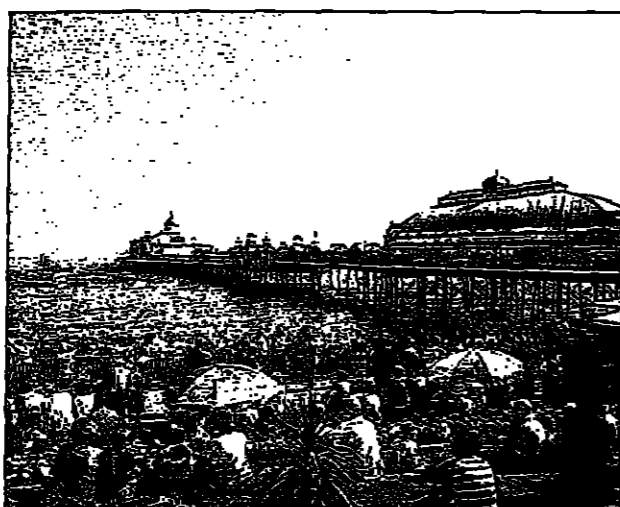
STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Stock Market Writer of the Year

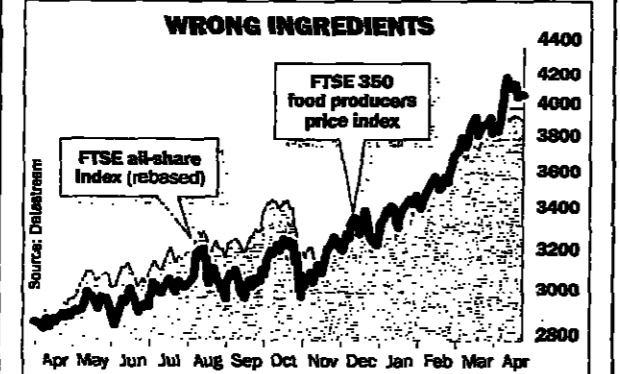
Late rally helps to keep FTSE above 6,000 level

SHARE prices went into a nose-dive that left them precariously poised just above the 6,000 level last night. Overnight setbacks for both Tokyo and Hong Kong set the scene for a difficult session in London. It is feared that the apparent reluctance of the Japanese to revive their domestic economy will result in a deepening of the Asian crisis. An opening fall for the Dow Jones industrial average in New York added to their woes. At one stage, the FTSE 100 index was down almost 110 points but managed to rally towards the close with the help of a large buy programme. The index closed 72.1 down at 6,002.0 in thin conditions that saw a total of 762 million shares change hands. Brokers were last night warning the market of further volatility this morning when the FTSE 100 April futures series expires. Bank shares came under the hammer. Lloyds TSB was the biggest faller among the top 100, tumbling 68p, or 6.4 per cent, to 995p after one press report stated the obvious and pointed out that the shares were overvalued. "That comment could be applied to just about all the banks," was the terse response of another broker. Others to lose ground included HSBC down 91p at 1.19, reflecting overnight selling in the Far East. Standard Chartered 35p to 1.04, NatWest Bank 30p to 1.17, Woolwich 85p to 363p, Halifax 17p to 871p, and Alliance & Leicester 15p to 888p. Elsewhere in financials, Norwich Union lost 13p at 465p, General Accident 29p at 1.57, and Commercial Union 22p at 1.25. The drug companies suffered sharp falls amid signs that recent speculative buying was starting to dry up. SmithKline Beecham (SB) fell 24p to 725p after brokers failed to glean anything fresh from its presentation to brokers and fund managers in the City. Glaxo Wellcome fell 49p to 1.67, while takeover favourite Zeneca was off 77p at 2.75. This week Roche, the Swiss drugmaker, denied claims that it was on the lookout for suitable bid targets and sentiment in the sector has been dented by reports of problems with antibiotics in the US. The proposed get-together of GKN with Italy's Fin-



First Leisure, which owns Eastbourne Pier, advanced 30p, boosted by a number of approaches for its resorts division

mechanical lifted the shares 32p to 1.06. The two sides plan to merge their helicopter arms to share development costs and compete more effectively on world markets. Teletext slipped 3 1/2p to 85 1/2p after confirmation of the agreed bid from General Cable 3p better at 1.65p. The £649 million deal is seen as the first step in a big shake-up of the TV cable industry. It was the first day of trading for two new issues. Shares of Otakar were placed at 153p and opened at 205 1/2p. The retailer saw its price race up to a peak of 210p as almost one million shares changed hands. It closed at 203 1/2p, a premium of 50 1/2p. Oxford Glyciences also made a positive start after a placing at 280p by Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, the broker. Shares in the biotechnology group touched a peak of 295p before retreating to close at 286 1/2p, a premium of 3 1/2p. Shield Diagnostics, a weak market earlier this week, rallied 10p to 540p. Brokers say the company, down from a peak of 777p, is looking vulnerable to a takeover. The buyers continue to chase Electronics Boutique sharply higher after a sixteenfold rise in profits announced this week. The shares rose a further 5 1/2p to 77 1/2p, stretching their rise during the past three days to 14 1/2p. Shares of Prestbury Group return from suspension today after shareholder approval earlier this week to acquire a £103.3 million property portfolio from MEPC. They were frozen at 5 1/2p and are expected to be requoted at 6p where the company carries a price tag of £200 million. Bullish comments at the Capita Group annual meeting boosted the shares 18p to 467 1/2p. Shareholders were told business remains buoyant and at the end of the first quarter the group was "significantly ahead" of the corresponding period in 1997. First Leisure, which owns Eastbourne Pier, says it had received a number of approaches for its resorts division. Brokers say the business could fetch in excess of £100 million. The shares jumped 30p to 367p. A profits warning left Faupet Trading 4p lower at 26p. Trading was tough in March and will help boost profits to last year's level. Absens Recruitment fell 5p to 335p after an extraordinary general meeting. But the price has risen 50p since Easter and today makes its debut on the big board. GILT-EDGED: Bond prices in London came under pressure to end lower on the day amid growing fears that the Bundesbank may raise rates today. In the futures pit, the June series of the long gilt ended 1/4 down at 109 1/4 in thin trading. NEW YORK: Shares opened lower, pulling back from record levels, as a weak day on Japanese markets provided unsettling reminders of the continuing economic crisis in Asia. By midday the Dow Jones industrial average was down 81.46 to 9,080.81.



IT HAS been a difficult week for some of the food manufacturers. Associated British Foods fell a further 13p to 557p in the wake of this week's disappointing trading news. Brokers have begun the task of downgrading their profit numbers yet again with NatWest Markets cutting its forecast by £3 million to £422 million. Meanwhile, Henderson Crosthwaite is now urging clients to take a cautious view of Tate & Lyle, down 18 1/2p at 528p. It is worried about problems in the European starch market. Sally Jones, at Crédit Lyonnais, the broker, said this week's events have served to widen the gaps in the sector still further. "The sector has been polarising for some time with international branded stocks like Cadbury Schweppes and Unilever, enjoying good ratings. Then there are the others." Cadbury rose 6p to 904p, while Unilever eased 4 1/2p to 612 1/2p. ABF and Tate & Lyle are really commodity stocks. There is a big difference between them and Cadbury and Unilever," said Jones.

MAJOR INDICES

Table listing major stock indices from New York, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Amsterdam, Sydney, Frankfurt, Singapore, Brussels, Paris, Zurich, London, and others, with their respective values and changes.

RECENT ISSUES

Table listing recent stock issues such as Aberdeen Crumble, Advent 2 VCT, Do 85% Criv Ltd, etc., with their issue sizes and prices.

RIGHTS ISSUES

Table listing rights issues for companies like Cap & Regal, Memory Corp, etc., with their terms and prices.

MAJOR CHANGES

Table listing major stock price changes, including First Leisure, French Conn, BOC, etc., with their current and previous prices.

TEMPUS Prepared for take-off

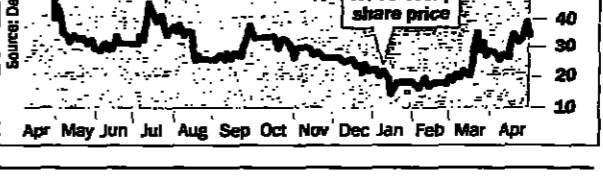
ONCE upon a time Westland was a trifling company that topped great men in high places. Now it is a substantial player in the defence market with little political significance. But yesterday's memorandum of understanding between GKN and Finmeccanica has wider importance than the prelude to a financial merger. The two parties now have the means to create a cross-border European defence business with the clout to compete head-on with the American defence combines - which in the case of helicopters means Boeing/McDonnell Douglas. Ironically, Sikorsky, which once rescued the British tyro, has itself become an also-ran and there is every possibility that a Westland/Agusta combination could lead to a merger with its former saviour. Further European consolidation is also on

Wace Group

WACE GROUP has already staged one recovery from near disaster during the 1990s. Its shares having collapsed from 279p two years ago to a recent low of 16 1/2p. Wace now has to do it all over again. The sale of Wace's four UK printing offices represents a reasonable start. The price of £53 million was a bit better than expected and resolves the immediate worries over the company's debt position. The sale will leave the group with about £15 million net cash by the end of 1998. However, having lost £10.3 million before exceptional gains in 1997, there is still a lot of work to be done. The troubled US operations alone incurred a loss of more than £6.5 million, blamed on management turnover, a loss

of customers and a series of ill-fated purchases.

Peter Brown, the chairman, claims relaunching Wace as an imaging and graphics company concentrating on pre-press digital services will put the business back on track. Yet the company is still expected to lose another £4 million this year. After blowing up for a second time, Wace has exasperated its City following. It will take a long time to win back investors' confidence. Having recovered modestly to 40p, the shares fell back to 35p yesterday, with no prospect of dividends for at least 18 months. Wace is strictly for those bravehearts who can afford to ignore the track record.



Telewest

THE departure of Stephen Davidson as chief executive of Telewest on the same day that it pulled off a £649 million merger with General Cable is a clear demonstration of the turbulent waters in which cable companies sail. It is also perhaps an uneasy start to the new life as an expanded company. The City was not too impressed by the deal, with shares in Telewest falling 3 1/2p to 85 1/2p, although analysts were both surprised and encouraged by the willingness of shareholders to subscribe to Telewest's rights issue. Telewest has certainly not picked up a bargain with General Cable, but neither has it paid too much above its own rating. Both companies have recently undergone radical restructuring programmes, so reducing the need for a messy and expensive disposal and redundancy programme. The deal does bring one

advantage of importance in the cable industry: size. In an industry of lumbering international giants, size clearly matters. Uncertainty in the cable market will continue, although the main task now for Telewest is to work on market penetration: only about 24 per cent of UK households who can use cable services do.

It will also need to plough money into developing high-speed telecom systems to meet growing demand from both households and businesses. On balance, it looks better placed to do this now than it did before the merger. Investors can expect little further progress until a replacement is found, and that could be at least another couple of months. Premier Farnell has to decide whether it wants to hang on to its smaller businesses in industrial products and product manufacturing. Embarrassingly, these were the only parts of the group that were able to improve their margins last year. The core catalogue distribution businesses, Newark Electronics in the US and Farnell in Europe, both suffered falling margins. So much for the benefits that Mr Poulson saw in Farnell's merger with Premier two years ago. Deciding whether this is a temporary glitch or a longer standing problem must await the arrival of the new boss. More attractive opportunities are available for investors. EDITED BY PAUL DURMAN

COMMODITIES

Table listing commodity prices for various items like COCOA, ROBUSTA COFFEE, WHITE SUGAR, MEAT & LIVESTOCK COMMISSION, etc.

GENI LONDON GRAIN FUTURES

Table listing grain futures prices for items like WHEAT, BARLEY, POTATO, RUBBER, etc.

LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES

Table listing financial futures prices for items like Long Gilt, German Govt Bond, Five Year Gilt, etc.

DOLLAR RATES

Table listing dollar exchange rates for various countries like Australia, Belgium, Denmark, etc.

WALL STREET

Table listing Wall Street stock prices for various companies like AMP Inc, AMR Corp, etc.

LIFE OPTIONS

Table listing life insurance options and prices for various policies.

LONDON METAL EXCHANGE

Table listing metal exchange prices for various metals like Copper, Zinc, Tin, etc.

EUROPEAN MONEY DEPOSITS (%)

Table listing European money deposit rates for various currencies and terms.

GOLD/PRECIOUS METALS (Baird & Co)

Table listing gold and precious metal prices and rates for various items.

OTHER STERLING

Table listing other sterling exchange rates for various currencies.

STERLING SPOT AND FORWARD RATES

Table listing sterling spot and forward rates for various currencies.

FTSE VOLUMES

Table listing FTSE 100 trading volumes for various companies.

Large advertisement for 'Choose Life' featuring a woman's face and the text 'Washing beyond 10' and 'Choose Life'.

ECONOMIC VIEW

ANATOLE KALETSKY



Washington outlook bright beyond Tokyo storm clouds

Indecision and lack of leadership by Hashimoto leads to loss of confidence

Last month this column discussed the remarkable mutation whereby previously hawkish central bankers were shedding their heavy plumage and turning into doves and chickens. With the world's economic policymakers all gathered in Washington this week for the spring meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Group of Seven (G7), it seemed appropriate to look in again on the central bankers' aviary.

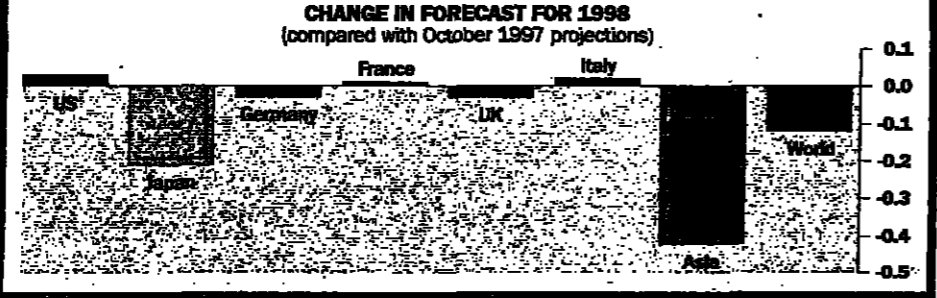
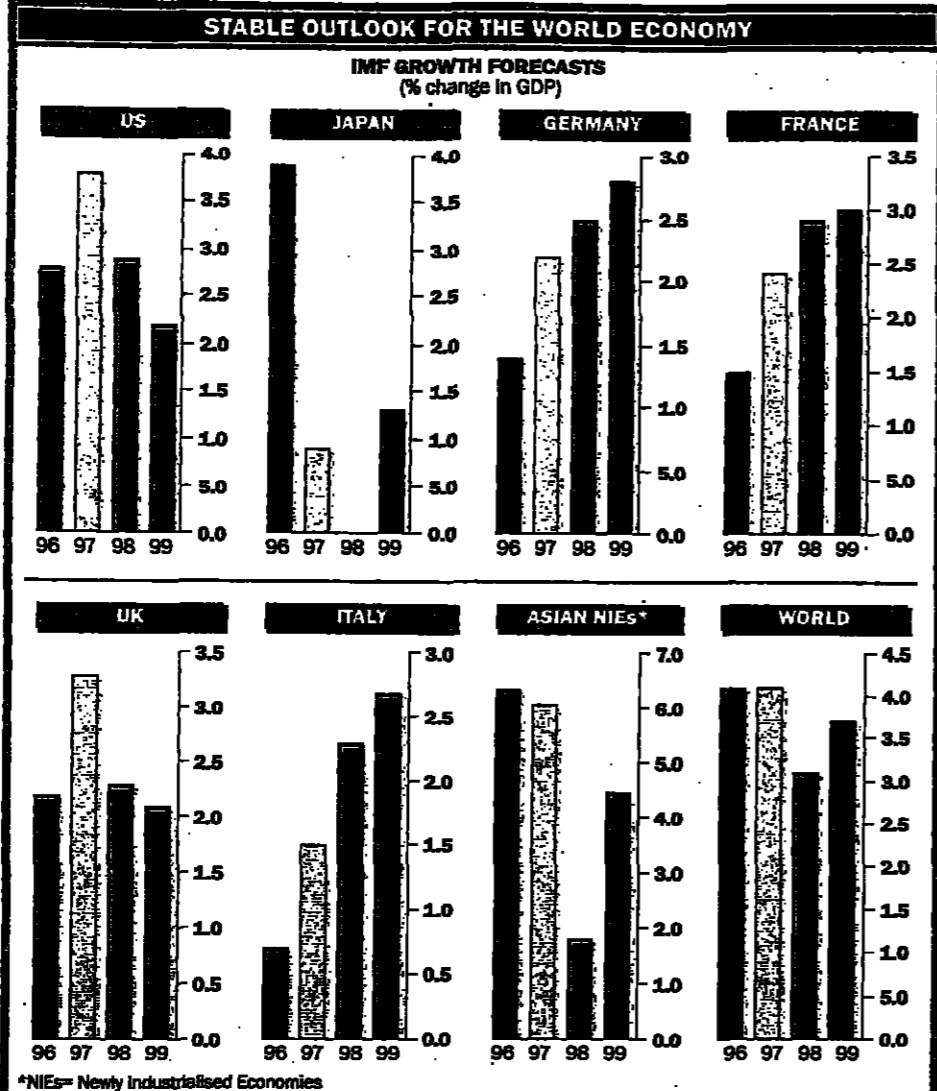
The main conclusion to emerge from the Washington meetings was predictable, but nonetheless important. The Asian crisis, which was mainly responsible for the sudden disappearance of hawks in the central banks, has turned out to be more damaging than expected for the countries directly involved, but it has been little more than a pinprick for the advanced economies of America and Europe.

For example, the IMF now expects the four leading South East Asian countries (Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines) to suffer a 2.7 per cent decline in gross domestic product this year. This compares with the implausibly bullish estimate of 1.7 per cent growth produced by the IMF as recently as late December.

Overall, the IMF has downgraded its growth forecasts for the Asian newly industrialised countries by 1.8 percentage points since last December and by a total of 4.2 percentage points since October last year. But while Asia has suffered, the outlook for the advanced economies has remained unscathed or even improved, especially in America.

The US economy is now expected to grow by 2.9 per cent this year. The British economy by 2.3 per cent (and both these figures, in my humble view, may still be something of an underestimate). Most economists wrongly predicted that the Asian crisis would hit America harder than Europe. But now, despite the marked deterioration in Asia, the IMF has lifted its US forecast 0.3 points above the one it published last October and 0.5 points above the forecast in December's special report on the Asian crisis. The forecast for the European Union, which now shows 1998 growth of 2.8 per cent, is the same as it was last October, but 0.2 points higher than the one published last December. Indeed, as the chart shows, Japan is the only G7 country that faces a significant deterioration in the outlook — and that has more to do with the staggering incompetence of its own politicians and officials than with anything happening in Indonesia or Korea.

The key question raised by Washington meetings is whether



er the contrary trends captured by all these figures — Asia deteriorating, while the rest of the world continues to accelerate — will continue in the year ahead. Most probably, both these processes will continue, at least for another year or so.

There are three reasons to expect a continuing divergence between Asia and the rest of the world. Firstly, the worst is not yet over for developing Asia. Secondly, macroeconomic conditions in America and Europe remain benign and policy remains expansive. Thirdly, the crisis of public administration in Japan is moving from bad to worse.

Beginning with conditions in Asia, the likelihood must surely be that the IMF's economists are still underestimating the real depth of the decline, if only because more optimistic growth projections can help with the task of restoring confidence and refinancing these economies. When the present "dead-cat bounce" in Asian financial markets is over and the tide of unemployment and bankruptcies starts rising in earnest, the final figures will probably reveal much deeper depressions than the ones estimated by the IMF today. The experience of past debt crises in relatively poor economies, with relatively small public sectors and under-

developed financial systems, suggests that contractions in GDP of 5 to 7 per cent are more likely than the mild, Western-style recessions assumed by the IMF.

In the long-run Asia may, with luck, follow the precedent set by Latin America and emerge from its debt crisis more competitive, and more politically stable than when it went in. The immediate question for the rest of the world,

Japan still believes it can solve its problems with confidence tricks

however, is whether the trouble in Asia matters very much, even if conditions do continue to deteriorate. From the macroeconomic standpoint, the answer is the same today as it was when the crisis started last autumn: Asia is not very important. Excluding Japan and China, Asia accounts for about 3 per cent of global demand. So even a massive disturbance in Asia, such as a 50 per cent devalu-

tion or an outright depression in Korea or Thailand, is far less important to the global economy than a small adjustment in G7 countries, say a half per cent move in American interest rates or a modest tax cut in Japan.

What is important for Britain and the other rich industrialised countries is the impact of the central bankers and G7 finance ministers. On this score, the news from Washington was, again, a mixture of good and bad.

First the good news. The Asian crisis has administered a salutary shock to policymakers in America and Europe. After spending two decades repeating the mantra that the only legitimate objective of monetary policy is to control inflation, central bankers have finally realised that the ultimate purpose of all macroeconomic policy is to keep an economy operating as close as possible to full capacity and full employment.

In the short-term, this shift of emphasis virtually guarantees a period of rapid growth in both America and Europe. Whether this conversion proves to be genuine in the long-run remains to be seen. I personally suspect that central bankers in Europe (and this includes Britain) are very reluctant converts

to the new emphasis on demand management. Hence my belief that former hawks, such as Eddie George, are now chickens, who will panic at the sight of accelerating demand, rather than genuine doves, who would welcome a long period of falling unemployment and rapid growth. But that will be an issue for later in the year or perhaps even in 1999. For the moment, the monetary spigots remain open. Continuing growth therefore seems assured, even in Britain, where the more efficient exporters will continue to benefit from strong European and American demand. For these monetary blessings, we can all thank the Asian crisis.

Now for the bad news from Washington. The paralysis in Japan, whose economy is three times as big as that of the rest of Asia, including China, is even worse than expected. Japan at the start of this year was balanced on a knife-edge. If its politicians did the right thing, instituting a whole-hearted programme of Keynesian fiscal retrenchment, the economy could have recovered strongly. The financial markets would have taken off like a rocket. If, on the other hand, the politicians stuck to their pre-Keynesian orthodoxy and continued to fret about the budget deficit in the midst of recession, there was a serious chance that Japan would plunge into a full-scale depression, perhaps triggered by a financial meltdown.

Three months ago, I was optimistic about Japan, on the assumption that the Government would do the right thing when all the alternatives were exhausted. Today, that judgment looks wrong. A depression and financial meltdown in Japan seems increasingly likely. The supposedly reformist package announced by Ryutaro Hashimoto, the Prime Minister, just before the Washington meetings, may have seemed large enough in its raw numbers to have a decent economic impact.

However, beneath the surface, the measures were about as discouraging as they could be. The tax cuts, described by Mr Hashimoto as totalling Y4 trillion (£18 billion), turned out to be only half that amount.

The deceptive presentation of Mr Hashimoto's package, along with the huge (and unsuccessful) currency intervention immediately undertaken by the Bank of Japan, not to mention the failed attempts to manipulate the Tokyo stock market with public money — all conveyed the same message. The Japanese authorities still believe they can solve their country's problems with economic confidence tricks and cat-and-mouse games in financial markets.

Perhaps the most powerful message to come out of Washington meetings was the indecision and lack of leadership in the Japanese Government's approach to its economic problems. It was hardly surprising that the G7 communiqué, which seemed justifiably optimistic about every other feature of the global economic picture, betrayed an obvious lack of confidence in Mr Hashimoto and Japan.

Jobs on the line in Britain's booming call centre culture

The world of work was not meant to be like this at the dawn of the 21st century. Techno-faddists told us that computers would replace mindless drudgery, liberate us from repetitive tasks and create a demand of unfettered human creativity.

They should look at call centres — Britain's fastest growing industry. Sprouting like mushrooms across Scotland and the North of England, they employ more than 1 per cent of the workforce and by the next century one out of every 50 people with a job will be sitting at a workstation, wearing a telephone headset and staring at a visual display unit.

If you work in a call centre you are probably female, employed by a bank, an insurer or, increasingly, a large retailing firm. Last week Next said that it would create 1,750 jobs in a £15 million call centre on the site of a former colliery near Rotherham, South Yorkshire. Woolworths is setting up call centres for its mail order business, while in February Barclays and the Pru announced plans to build centres in Sunderland and Derby, respectively.

In aggregate, these centres will employ many thousands of people selling insurance or toasters, ordering a cheque book and paying a customer's gas bill.

Jobs galore, no wonder local authorities and regional development agencies are scrambling to entice these new mass employers to their towns. These are factories in all but name; call centres make nothing tangible but they are highly efficient ways of generating sales and limiting costs, all because computers bring managers a previously unimaginable level of control over human activity.

According to Bifu, the bank and insurance union, the use of computers allows supervisors to monitor precisely the speed and performance of operators. Their day is controlled by a computer screen which scripts their conversation with customers, records the speed at which they answer calls and even records the amount of time spent off-duty in the washroom.

Simon Kennedy, of Bifu, says there is a burn-out problem among staff in call centres who are monitored against continually rising sales targets. He said: "It can become intolerable, the telephone calls are taped, to see how well you deal with customers but also to check whether you are closing on a sale."

Mr Kennedy says that not all call centres are bad and many, particularly among the banks, are unionised. Pay is often better than in bank branches where fear of redundancy is rife. However, he notes: "In call centres, insecurity is not so much about whether your job is safe but how long you can hack it. It tends to be a young person's job." Staff turnover in call centres can be as high as 40 per cent.

Business is clearly booming but how long will it last? Two factors suggest that Britain's romance with telesales may be a temporary fling. Costs are a key determinant in siting a call centre, according to Paul Williams, of Matrix Marketing, a subsidiary of Cincinnati Bell, which operates an agency call centre in Newcastle. He dismisses the popular myth that northern or Celtic accents

Growth has mushroomed but there is a downside, says Carl Mortished

are preferred — hence the profusion of call centres in Leeds, Newcastle and Glasgow. What is needed is a "follow the sun" strategy. A BA spokesman said: "Future centres will not be in the UK. We are serving a global market and can make the time zones work for us."

In future, calling your bank after midnight could yield a sunny response from a voice in Bangalore, possibly a cheaper alternative to night work in Newcastle. Sitel, another US operator of call centres, reckons the UK has its attractions. Catherine Miller, marketing manager explains that labour laws are important. "For companies setting up call centres, the UK is fairly attractive: it can be cheaper and more flexible in terms of the hours we can work but there is a new European law that may make a difference."

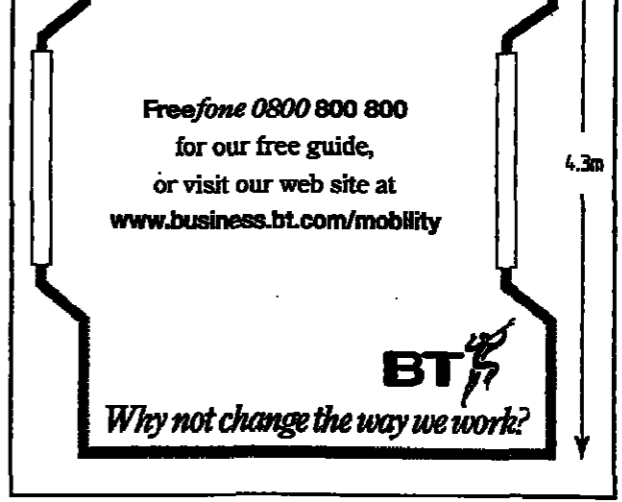
Such talk is not reassuring to unions. Mr Kennedy said: "Ultimately, this is about computers and it is a worry how long these jobs will last. You cannot easily apply for a job in India." Sitel has operations across the US as well as Australia, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, France, Germany, Spain, Belgium and the Republic of Ireland. But the technology is reassuringly imperfect. This writer called Sitel's freephone number to reach a friendly voice in Kingston upon Thames who mistook this newspaper for a well-known New York title of similar name. "No, *The Times* of London," I explained. She was still puzzled. "My telephone says you are calling from America. We must have routed your call via New York."



More customers are doing business over the telephone

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Why not change the way we work? BT

Choose 'Life'

ANYONE who has seen the film *Trainspotting* will know that they like to live dangerously in Edinburgh. But it comes as some surprise that this new, may-care culture has infiltrated the staid portals of the avowedly mutual Standard Life.

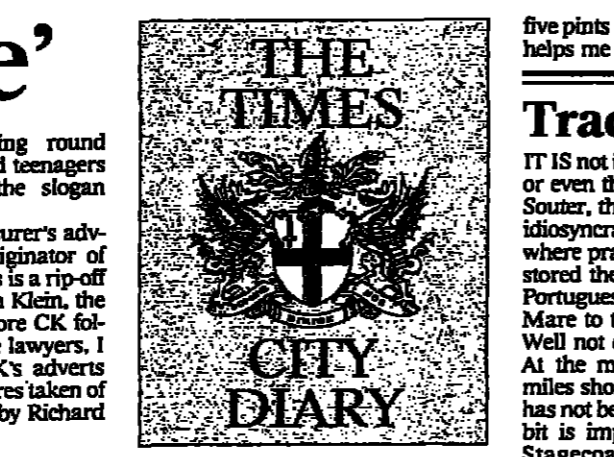
First, the insurer rattles the cages of BT, with adverts for its new Standard Bank showing some similarity to the "It's good to talk" campaign. Now Standard Life is trying to persuade young people to

buy pensions by sending round posters of undernourished teenagers wearing T-shirts with the slogan "Pension" on them.

Pamela Hyde — the insurer's advertising manager and originator of the idea — admits that this is a rip-off of the campaign by Calvin Klein, the fashion designer. But before CK follows BT in running to the lawyers, I should point out that CK's adverts are rather similar to pictures taken of Andy Warhol and his set by Richard Avedon in the 1960s.

Farewell

I AM sad to record that one of the grand old characters of the City, Lord Swaythling, is retiring due to ill health just short of his 70th birthday.



the first members of the British Horseracing Board. He is also chairman of Woburn Golf & Country Club and is expected to be succeeded in this post by Rupert Hambro.

Nap tip

AFTER the description of brown sauce as a delicacy, Brook Street, the employment services group, has contacted me to explain how to avoid falling asleep at your desk in the afternoon. It is down to what you eat, says Brook Street. Cut out chocolate and crisps — they suggest — and eat healthy snacks such as bagels, rice cakes or celery stuffed with peanut butter (sic). Personally, I find not downing

five pints in the pub at lunchtime also helps me to stay awake.

Track trouble

IT IS not in the nature of this diary — or even this paper — to praise Brian Souter, the Stagecoach boss with the idiosyncratic wardrobe. But praise where praise is due. His firm has restored the old tram service from the Portuguese coastal town of Praia da Mare to the medieval city of Sintra. Well not quite all the way to Sintra. At the moment it stops about two miles short. Stagecoach says the line has not been restored fully, so the last bit is impassable. Sounds just like Stagecoach's South West Trains blaming its delays on Railtrack.

ANOTHER RAIL operator blaming Railtrack for its troubles is Virgin, which I see advertising for "first class hosts" to work on the platform of Euston Station. They will greet first class travellers and show them to their seats. Given that a friend of mine was recently delayed for five hours because a Virgin train had no guard, may I suggest that the bearded one's recruitment policy is ill-focused.

Bed news

THE Hall and Shepherd award for diplomacy must go to Olexandr Omelchenko, Mayor of Kiev, who has been



"Do we have anything which isn't battered?"



Standard Life is using derivative posters in a bid to sell pensions

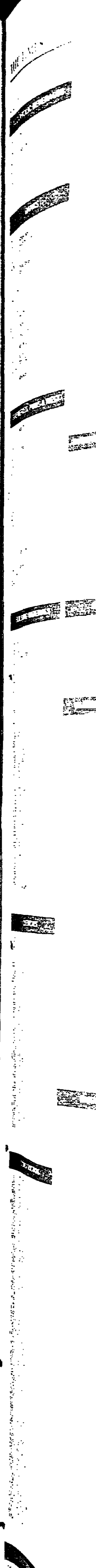
THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

Table of unit trust prices for various funds including ASSET MANAGEMENT, CANADIAN LIFE, and others. Columns include fund name, price, and change.

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Equities fall in thin trading

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

Table listing various stock categories including ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, BANKS, BREWERIES, PUBS & REST, BUILDING MATERIALS, CHEMICALS, CONSTRUCTION, DISTRIBUTORS, ELECTRICITY, ELECTRONIC & ELECT, ENGINEERING, ENGINEERING VEHICLES, FOOD MANUFACTURERS, HEALTHCARE, HOUSEHOLD GOODS & TEXT, INSURANCE, INVESTMENT TRUSTS, LEISURE & HOTELS, MEDIA, MINING, OIL & GAS, OTHER FINANCIAL, PHARMACEUTICALS, PRINTING & PAPER, PROPERTY, RETAILERS - FOOD, RETAILERS - GENERAL, SUPPORT SERVICES, TELECOMMUNICATIONS, TRANSPORT, and WATER. Each entry includes stock name, price, and change.

Main table of equity prices with columns for High, Low, Company, Price, and % Change. It covers a wide range of companies and sectors, providing a comprehensive overview of the market's performance.

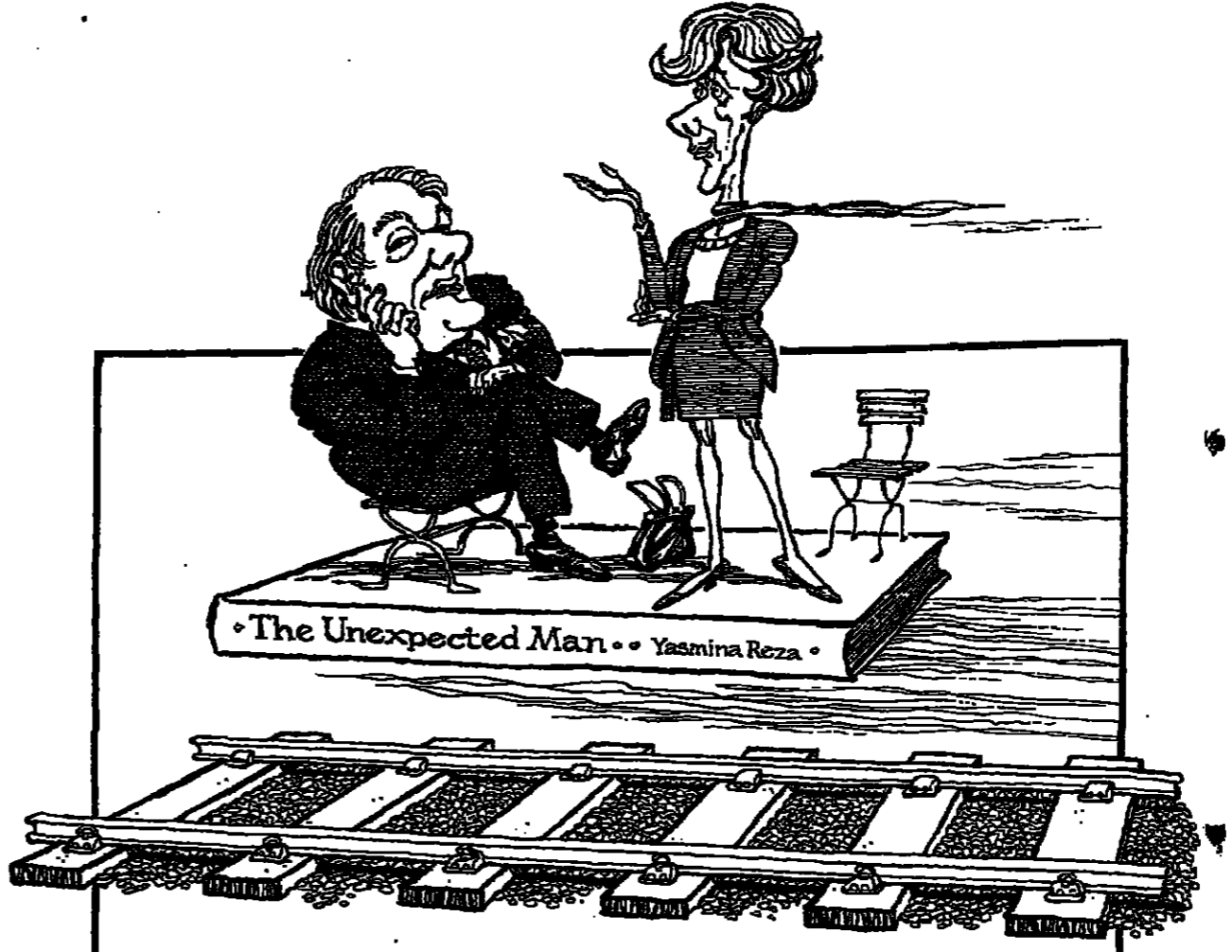
Table of equity prices, including sections for BRITISH FUNDS, SHORTS (under 5 years), LONGS (over 15 years), UNDATED, and MEDIUMS (5 to 15 years). It also includes an INDEX-LINKED section and further details on various financial instruments.

Advertisement for Church's Scotch Whisky. Features the brand name 'Church's' in a stylized font, a black silhouette of a man in a tuxedo, and the slogan 'make a statement'. Below the image, it says 'Cayman in Rosso Tempest. Call 01604 751251'.

Source: FT Information. All figures are in pence unless otherwise stated. All prices are for the closing of the day.

Reading between the lines

Personally I always read on trains, but I usually find I am in a minority. What are they thinking of, those people who simply sit or, by way of variety, stare out of the window? Maybe nothing much. Or maybe their thoughts are drifting on piano-playing to habros, to the eccentricities and minor betrayals of old chums, to the respective merits of All Bran and Ex-Lax, to the characters behind the faces opposite: the ease with the man and woman so finely played by Michael Gambon and Eileen Atkins in Yasmina Reza's two-hander.



A man, a woman and a book: Michael Gambon and Eileen Atkins in Yasmina Reza's play, *The Unexpected Man*.

sharp, shrewd wit is often in evidence, as is the same interest in prickly people. The play is not about friendship, like *Art*, but it touches often on the human need for others, and knows the way we warily observe and circle one another. And it too comes to a healing, touching yet un sentimental conclusion about both art and life.

That has impact because Gambon comes across as a sour, even coarse man. That great cauliflower face reddens and clenches as he broods about his irritating son, his daughter's over-age fiancé, the friends who are enjoying sex more than him, the critic who had reservations about *The Unexpected Man*, and what he suspects are his own fading creative powers. Meanwhile Atkins's spiky, aloof traveller seems much preoccupied with the death or disappearance of those she loved. Even her sophisticated friend Georges has become a boring family man, complete with a smiling baby called Eric and a push-chair. Atkins's anguish as she mentions this awful object is only one of several quietly hilarious moments.

But basically the piece is quietly serious. Reza evokes the kind of novelist that Gambon is—dark in his lack of faith in the naked ape, affirmative in his fondness for human quirks—and makes you see how his work would appeal to a woman like Martha, who thinks that "the desperate are the only profound, the only really attractive people". They are strangers on a train. But she needs him, he needs her. And Yasmina Reza is dramatist enough to leave you feeling that it matters.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE
 This review appeared in late editions of *The Times* yesterday.

LONDON

FRAGMENTED LIVES: The festival celebrates the work of classical music's enfant terrible Mark-Anthony Turnage goes out on a high note here this weekend, in the Queen Elizabeth Hall tonight and tomorrow, 7.45pm. The London Sinfonietta presents the first new, fully staged, British production of the composer's acclaimed opera *Crack*—the Orpheus myth relocated to East London during the Thatcher years—since its 1988 Munich premiere. Core Venables directs a cast of four singers joined by a chorus of students from the B.R.I.T. Diego Masson conducts. Three further works by Turnage, *Ascend*, *Requiem* and *This Silence*, can be heard in tomorrow's leg by the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group (Purcell Room, 4pm) which also features pieces by Steve Mackland, David Lang and Colin Matthews. Nicholas Kok conducts. South Bank, SE1. (0171-960 4242) **C**

TODAY'S CHOICE

A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Mark Hargre

ELSEWHERE

CHILDREN/JAZZ: The town's third International Jazz Festival takes place this weekend, bringing together musicians from all over the world to celebrate the game in its many incarnations. A line-up featuring a mix between established performers and the best of the new bands includes such roll-players as John Scofield, the Dewey Redman Quartet, Django Bates, Courtney Pine and Pee Wee Ellis. Festival Box Office: 01242 227979.



Thomas Hampson joins the LSO in the Barbican

LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: Music by Mahler, Messiaen and Britten are featured in the concert, the first in a series contrasting the works of the Austrian composer with American classics. Two authors from behind the conductor: Michael Tippett and the baritone Thomas Hampson join the LSO for the series, with guest performances tonight by the French pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudaud. Barbican, Silk Street, EC2. (0171-638 8891). Tonight, 7.30pm. **C**

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: Disney's film turned into a full Broadway musical. Julie Alan and Brighton and Alexander Hanley, as the Prince, receive support from the Mad, Dark, Gruffins and Norman Postington. Dominion, Tottenham Court Road, W1. (0171-416 6080) Mon-Sat, 7.30pm. mat Sat, 2.30pm. **C**

BEEN SO LONG: Razana Sibani directs the Walker's first play, live and recorded in music. Camden Town. Royal Court Upstairs (Ambassadors), West St, WC2. (0171-595 5000) Mon-Sat, 7.45pm. mat Sat, 2.30pm. **C**

THE BULLET: New Joe Penhall play set in a South London semi, where parents' two sons and a girl friend (Emily Wood) poke bitter secrets. Dominic Cooke directs. Dominion Warehouse, Eastham Street, WC2. (0171-359 1730) Mon-Sat, 8pm. mat Sat, 2.30pm. **C**

CAMINO REAL: Tennessee Williams's weird old surrealistic romantic play set at the end of everywhere. Simon Plimpton's cast from Stratford includes: John Gielgud, Peter Egan, Leah Popham, Bridget Turner, Susannah York. Wyndham's, Wyndham's, Wyndham's. (0171-253 6633) Tonight and tomorrow, 7.15pm. mat tomorrow, 2pm. in repertoire. **C**

CYMBELINE: A heart-catching production from the new production of the opera. The Centre of Actor Training and the New Music Theatre. The Strand, WC2. (0171-638 8891) Tonight and tomorrow, 7.15pm. mat tomorrow, 2pm. in repertoire. **C**

THEATRE GUIDE

Jeremy Kingdon's assessment of theatre showing in London

HOUSE HAL, returns only. **C**
 Some seats available **C**
 Seats at all prices **C**

GIRLS' NIGHT OUT: Dave Simpson's touring show set at a small strip show for boys, is said to reveal more than meets the eye. Victoria Palace, Victoria St. SW1. (0171-359 1731) Mon-Fri 7.30pm. Sat, 5.30pm and 8pm. **C**

THE ICEMAN COMETH: Eugene O'Neill's long and magnificent drama on the coming of self-deception. Howard Davies directs a great cast led by Rupert Graves, Clarke Peters, and Helen Mirren. Spacely, St. Mark's, W1. (0171-494 5085) Mon-Sat, 7.45pm. mat Sat and Sun. **C**

AN IDEAL HUSBAND: Christopher Cusack's production stars Peter Hall's excellent production stars Christopher Cusack. (0171-494 5085) Mon-Sat, 7.45pm. mat Sat and Sun. **C**

KAT AND THE KINGS: Eminent new 1960s rock'n'roll musical about a South African group that never quite existed. Vaudeville Theatre, The Strand, WC2. (0171-638 8891) Mon-Thu, 8pm. Fri and Sat, 5.30pm and 8.30pm. **C**

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LONDON

LEICESTER: Linda Marlowe directs *Shakespeare's There Are Crimes and Crimes*, a poignant comedy set on a train, with Timothy Walker as a playwright with problems. Haymarket Theatre, Deodar Road, (01622 9197) Proves, Mon tonight, 7.30pm. Opens April 21, 7.30pm. Then Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, mat Wed (Apr 22), 2pm and Sat (May 2), 2.30pm. Until May 2. **C**

MANCHESTER: The International Society for Contemporary Music's annual festival arrives back in this country for the first time since 1971. The BBC Philharmonic Orchestra launches the festival with a concert tonight (Bradgewater Hall, 7.30pm) of works by Carl Ruggles, Ravel, Jan Sibelius and Gustav Mahler. Further weekend highlights are a collaboration between the Arditi Quartet and the Nash Ensemble in a performance of Beethoven's Piano Concerto (RNCM Opera Theatre, 7.30pm) and a recital by the decorated pianist, Irena Koscizka (Bradgewater Hall, Sunday, 7.30pm). Festival Box Office: (0161-907 9000).

ST ALBAN'S: Jonathan Holloway adapts and directs *The Aspern Papers*, Henry James's story of literary skulduggery. Red Shift's nationwide tour starts here. Buildings Arts Centre, St Albans, (01727 844222) Tonight and tomorrow, 8pm. **C**

LONDON GALLERIES: National: Henry Moore and the National Gallery (0171-747 3885). National Portrait: Peter Greenaway. Bresson Portraits (0171-306 0055). Royal Academy: Scots and the tea of Moscow (0171-530 500). Representing Peter Marston (0171-402 6075). Tate: Pains Bonnaud (0171-687 8000). W & A: The Power of the Poets (0171-638 8891/841).

THE MISANTHROPE: Elaine Paige plays Celine, with Michael Pennington as Alceste in a cast that includes Anna Carteret, Peter Bowles and David Troughton. Peter Hall directs a new translation of Moliere by Hattie Boulton. Phoenix Theatre, Denmark Street, W1. (0171-359 1734) Tonight and tomorrow, 7.45pm. in repertoire. **C**

SILAS MARNER: Geoffrey Beevers follows his acclaimed adaptation of George Eliot's *Silas Marner* with his famous tale of a child who meets a miser's heart. Orange Tree, Clarendon Street, Richmond (0181-940 3683) Mon-Sat, 7.45pm. mat Thu (Apr 23), 30p, Fri and Sat, 5pm. **C**

3 THINGS WE DO FOR LOVE: Alan Ayckbourn directs Jane Asher in his new comedy about a surprising love and its unscrupulous consequences on lovers. Greenwich Theatre, 180 Greenwich Way, SE18. (0171-494 5085) Mon-Sat, 7.45pm. mat Thu and Sat, 3pm. **C**

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The Unexpected Man Barbican Pt.

There is a bigish difference, though, between the average train trip and the journey these strangers are making from Paris to Frankfurt. He is a well-known novelist, she a passionate admirer of his work. She has his latest book in her handbag, and would be reading it, if she did not fear his reaction would be embarrassing or disappointing. In an evening lasting an hour and a quarter, it takes 50 minutes for him to break the silence, 60 for her to start reading, his *The Unexpected Man*, and roughly 73 for them to acknowledge who they are and what they feel.

Almost all of Matthew Warbus's production consists of reverie, though Atkins in particular often gets up from her chair and walks around the glass floor that, with shiny railway tracks beneath, is Mark Thompson's notion of a closed compartment. In other words, the play hasn't the neat, clever plot of Reza's *Art*, and is most unlikely to prove as successful. But the same

sharp, shrewd wit is often in evidence, as is the same interest in prickly people. The play is not about friendship, like *Art*, but it touches often on the human need for others, and knows the way we warily observe and circle one another. And it too comes to a healing, touching yet un sentimental conclusion about both art and life.

That has impact because Gambon comes across as a sour, even coarse man. That great cauliflower face reddens and clenches as he broods about his irritating son, his daughter's over-age fiancé, the friends who are enjoying sex more than him, the critic who had reservations about *The Unexpected Man*, and what he suspects are his own fading creative powers. Meanwhile Atkins's spiky, aloof traveller seems much preoccupied with the death or disappearance of those she loved. Even her sophisticated friend Georges

Waving, not drowning

Pennington as Alceste in a cast that includes Anna Carteret, Peter Bowles and David Troughton. Peter Hall directs a new translation of Moliere by Hattie Boulton. Phoenix Theatre, Denmark Street, W1. (0171-359 1734) Tonight and tomorrow, 7.45pm. in repertoire. **C**

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But basically the piece is quietly serious. Reza evokes the kind of novelist that Gambon is—dark in his lack of faith in the naked ape, affirmative in his fondness for human quirks—and makes you see how his work would

A (small) chorus line

They arrive breathlessly late for rehearsals, hustling through the aisles before taking their place next to the piano. This youthful trio have had a gruelling time of it lately, living proof that most actresses lead lives of quiet desperation. Part cabaret, part behind-the-scenes angst as *The Chorus Line*, 3 Divas does not worry about dramatic structure. Sharon D. Clarke, Lindsay Hamilton and Lisa Hull work around a throwaway script which is indeed thrown away after the interval, when the evening becomes a recital.

The programme is coy about the authorship of the wry jokes and complaints about no-good men. But none of this matters, since it is the songs that make it worthwhile. Sondheim fans are well catered for, sardonic pieces such as *Broadway Baby* matching the world-weary mood of the first half. There is as much pleasure to be had from more unexpected sources. Michel Legrand's yearning melody from *Yentl* is guaranteed to win over anyone allergic to Barbara Streisand. Kander and Ebb make a brief appearance with *Arthur and All That Jazz*. Porter and Sondheim are woven together on Hamilton's wistful performance of *So In Love* and *Losing My Mind*.

As the lights come up on the show

NEIL COOPER

CLIVE DAVIS

NEW RELEASES

DECONSTRUCTING HARRY (18): A wife's personal and professional life unravels. Fascinating, funny and unsettling Woody Allen film. Alan stars with the usual cast: Judy Davis, Dora Klavans, Billy Crystal and Elisabeth Shue. Barbican (0171-638 8891) Chelsea (0171-351 0742) Epsom (0171-839 3323) Carfax West End (0171-359 1722) Gate (0171-727 3523) Kensington (0181-315 4214) Swiss Cottage (0181-315 4214) Richmond (0181-332 0303) Green (0171-717-7121) St. Mark's, W1 (0171-835 2722) Screen/Barrow (0171-226 3250) Screen/Whiteley (0171-436 3350) Virgin Fulham Rd (0171-370 2659) **C**

CINEMA GUIDE

GREAT EXPECTATIONS (15): A young aristocrat (Ethan Hawke) finds success is bitter-sweet. Dickens's novel is updated to the 1990s. To film with Wynne Evans, Peter Dinklage, Peter Onorati and Alan Rickman. Director: Alfonso Cuaron. ABC: Baker Street (0171-325 9772) Tottenham Court Road (0171-636 6148) Empire (020 8899 3000) Odessa: Camden Town (0181-315 4255) Kensington (0181-315 4214) Marble Arch (0181-315 4218) Swiss Cottage (0181-315 4250) Regent (0171-732121) UCI Whiteley St. (020 8899 3000) Virgin Chelsea (0171-352 6086) **C**

THEATRE GUIDE

Geoffrey Beevers's assessment of films in London and (where indicated with the symbol **C**) on release across the country

CURRENT

JACKIE BROWN (15): Pam Grier's money smuggler mixes ingenuity with the East. Entertainment adaptation of Elmore Leonard's comic thriller from Quentin Tarantino, with an excellent cast (Robert Forster, Samuel L. Jackson, Robert De Niro, Michael Keaton, Bridget Fonda). Empire (020 8899 3000) Greenwich (0181-235 3005) Odessa: Camden Town (0181-315 4255) Kensington (0181-315 4218) Swiss Cottage (0181-315 4214) UCI Whiteley St. (020 8899 3000) Virgin Chelsea (0171-352 6086) **C**

ART GALLERIES

MICHAEL PARKER GALLERY: 11 Motcomb St, London SW1. BRITISH ARTISTS IN PROCCO: From April 16th until May 15th. Tel: 0171 235 8148. Fax: 0171 235 8946.

EXHIBITIONS

EXHIBITION: IRISH, ENGLISH & CONTINENTAL PAINTINGS: 17th-27th April 1998. HARK, 47 Abchurch Lane, London EC4A 3DF. Tel: 0171 493 9188. Mon-Fri 10.30am-5pm. Sat-Sun: 12-4pm.

OPERA & BALLET

COLISEUM: 0171 832 8000 (4th) ENGLISH NATIONAL OPERA: TONIGHT 7.30 LD. PUCCHINI'S TRITICOLO

THEATRES

ADELPHI: cc 24hrs (big fee) 344 4444 Gps 415 332/400 614 900. **TILL FOR A TICKET! M.O.S. WINNER OUTSTANDING MUSICAL COMPANY:** CHICAGO THE MUSICAL. **RUTHIE HENSHALL: LEMPER HENRY GOODMAN: NIGEL PLANNER:** Mon-Sat 8, Wed & Sat Mat 2.30. **ALBERT 389 1730/344 4444:** Eves 7.45. Mts Thu 3 & Sat 4. **THE PETER HALL COMPANY:** Christopher Chaytor Kate Olfelt Simon Wood. **Madeline Potter:** Barbara Murray OSCAR WILDE'S CLASSIC COMEDY. **AN IDEAL HUSBAND:** GREAT AND GLORIOUS! S.T.M. **ALBERT 389 1730/344 4444:** Eves 7.45. Mts Thu 3 & Sat 4. **THE PETER HALL COMPANY:** Christopher Chaytor Kate Olfelt Simon Wood. **Madeline Potter:** Barbara Murray OSCAR WILDE'S CLASSIC COMEDY. **AN IDEAL HUSBAND:** GREAT AND GLORIOUS! S.T.M.

ALDWYCH

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CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE 484 5204/416 8000: 344 4444/420 000 (+big fee) Gps 494 5454. Dams: 416 6075/416 3221/416 5598. **C**

DURRY LANE

DURRY LANE THEATRE ROYAL: SS cc (big fee) 24hr 074 0171 484

Last month I had an Original Idea. That makes, let me see, almost two this decade. I was in the National Gallery, looking at the pictures. (No, that wasn't the Original Idea: do keep your facetious comments to yourself.) I emerged into warm sunshine (remember that?), turned into Charing Cross Road, and came across a street artist sketching a portrait of a tourist.

The sudden juxtaposition struck me. In an instant I had moved from art that was mostly ancient, revered like relics, priceless and untouchable; and stumbled, almost literally, upon art that was cheap and cheerful, only modestly competent but, above all, *happening*. The altresco artist's pencil moved with mesmerising swiftness over the paper; the whole process of commission, execution and sale was over in 15 minutes. Creation while you wait! This may sound distinctly naff, but I got more of a thrill from watching that lightning sketch taking shape than I did from paying homage to the Old Masters.

Don't get me wrong. This isn't a

Make it quick and make it rough

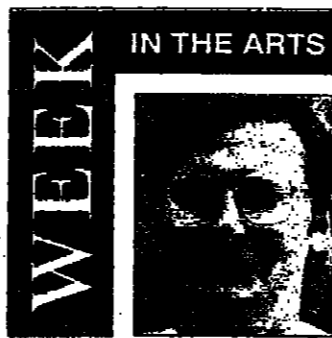
plea for ousting *Sunflowers* from the National Gallery in favour of *Passing Tourist No 328* by J. Blaggs. We cherish Old Masters for good reason: they are masterly. But the experience did trigger my Big Idea. Which is? That we must find ways to put spontaneity back into our culture.

At present it's too controlled, too predictable, too much like some factory production line with the creator at one end, rows of marketeers, producers, impresarios and curators in the middle, and the public waiting (or often not waiting) at the end. Nothing surprises any more: all is inevitable. No wonder that football is now spoken of as the "new opera". It has all the passion and spectacle, but with the advantage that you see the creative process going on right in front of you, and have no idea how the plot will end.

Consider how stultifyingly long-winded the cultural process has

become. Movie-makers take years to polish their product, and then the hype machine adds another layer of varnish. TV programmes are cut and dried well away from the public gaze. Opera singers and conductors are contracted years in advance to do repertoire written centuries earlier. Most big galleries know exactly what will be on their walls two years from now. The cultural industry has no space for the instant spark of brilliance that demands attention now.

Admittedly, the spoken theatre is less rigid. Occasionally some fringe venue will enterprisingly clear its stage to air a topical matter. One thinks of the Tricycle Theatre's gripping, dramatised readings from the Scott Inquiry. But in the West End the factory mentality is rarely abandoned. The big musicals rolling in this summer — *Rent*, *Show Boat*, *Oklahoma!*, *Saturday Night Fever*, *Whistle Down the Wind* —



RICHARD MORRISON

will have been months, even decades, in the honing. Yes, of course Trevor Nunn will do something "different" with *Oklahoma!*. I daresay that the "bright golden haze on the meadow" will turn out to be lethal gas escaping from the local silo. But that's interpretation,

not creativity in its basic sense. Even rock concerts now come packaged to the hilt. They might as well play the album through the speakers — and one suspects that they sometimes do. The true art of improvisation, in music or words, is dead outside the somewhat circumscribed worlds of the church organ loft and the jazz and comedy clubs. And even in the latter the stand-ups rely more upon preordained parades of jokes than upon spontaneous interaction with the audience.

Perhaps all this is inevitable. A public that gets most of its culture via film, TV or CDs is getting art that has been recorded and re-recorded to sterile perfection. The pressure is then on promoters of live events to match that error-free precision. That means eliminating risk. Unfortunately, you can't have true creativity without risk.

I would love to see riskiness given a run again, and I think the

public would, too. Suppose somebody set up a theatre in which nothing was more than a month old. A show would be written one week, rehearsed the next and performed in the third. What a chance to mirror current events. What urgency it would possess.

I would even like to see instant operas and musicals created this way. Britain has some terrific composers, but they are stifled by the interminable bureaucratic fiddle of getting a premiere in an opera house or big concert hall. Handel and Beethoven scribbled their concertos so fast that they usually ended up improvising the solo part. Rossini, Verdi, Mozart and Sullivan worked in furious haste to produce operas against the clock. Don't tell me that their art is the worse for it. The deadline is the true mother of invention. Give a talented composer a fortnight to concoct something memo-

orable; and watch the creaky old art form of opera explode into life. Culture has become too institutionalised. We need to rough it up, go back to basics, back to the troubadour and jester tradition that lived by quick wits and instant impact. Yes, it would be a journalistic art, and a lot of it — like this article and all that surrounds it — would be here today, gone tomorrow. But what true creative artist wouldn't relish the chance to establish a new, dangerous proximity to the public?

And yes, I would even like to see my street artist, or something like him, installed in every public gallery, counterpointing all the venerable canvases with a non-stop show of living art in the making. Damien Hirst could pickle a new sheep every day, and Gilbert could cahoot with George in front of our startled eyes. What's more, visitors would be encouraged to tell the artists exactly what they thought of the art being produced. What entertainment! You know, this Original Idea lark is rather fun; I might have another one next year.



Sir Dennis Stevenson at home in London: "My departure now will ensure that David Verey is fully in place for the new century. He's been a wonderful Tate trustee"

Time for a change of sugar daddy

VISUAL ART: As the Tate prepares for its move to Bankside, its chairman is leaving. Richard Cork unveils the gallery's big plans for the 21st century

When the Tate Gallery of Modern Art celebrates its millennial unweaving in the year 2000, Sir Dennis Stevenson is convinced that it will be hailed as "one of the wonders of the world". As chairman of the Tate's trustees since 1988, he has played a pivotal, much-admired role in the genesis and development of this visionary venture. But he will no longer occupy the chairmanship when the great Bankside building opens its doors. Stevenson has decided to retire in June 1998, when he hands over to David Verey, the chairman and chief executive of Lazard Brothers Ltd.

Stepping down will not be easy for this energetic, immensely likeable man, whose business career has led him to the chairmanships of Pearson and GPA. "I'll have withdrawal symptoms and be hell to live with," he admits. Everyone tried to persuade him to stay, including the Culture Secretary Chris Smith and the Tate's director Nick Serota. But Stevenson would not be swayed. "On a personal level, it's been fantastic working with Nick," he says, "but no one should do any job for more than ten years. My departure now will ensure that David Verey is fully in place for the new century. He's been a wonderful Tate trustee, and he's an all-round outstanding human being."

Not that the 52-year-old Stevenson shows any sign of giving up his interest in art. A cornucopia of paintings, drawings and sculpture festoons his early 19th-century Westminster house, testifying to a passion for collecting he shares with his mother Sylvia, a devotee of modern Scottish artists. "I don't have the Serota desire to surround each picture with acres of empty space," he laughs, looking cheerfully at the cluttered walls around him. "My house

in Suffolk is even more crowded with art, but I wouldn't call myself a collector. The true collector is completely obsessive, whereas I'm completely promiscuous."

At the moment, Stevenson is fully occupied, not only at Pearson and GPA but with a clutch of non-executive directorships, the chairmanship of Sinfonia 21 and advising the Prime Minister on implementing the Stevenson Commission, set up by Tony Blair to examine the role of information technology in schools.

His outstanding decade at the Tate will, nevertheless, feature prominently in any assessment of his career. Yet if Margaret Thatcher's hostility had prevailed, Stevenson would never have become chairman at all. "Thatcher saw me as a left-of-centre businessman, undermining and subversive. So she vetoed my appointment. She was nuts, because I was likely to do things at the Tate that she would approve of — like exploding the myth that efficiency is the enemy of excellence."

Eventually, after Tim Bell and others interceded on his behalf, she relented. And Stevenson found himself presiding over the trustees at a crucial moment in the gallery's history. Serota had just arrived as the new, young director. The need for expansion was already long recognised, and designs by James Stirling existed for three new buildings on the car park next to the Millbank premises. "But the plan didn't work, there wasn't enough space there," explains Stevenson. Reviewing the problem, he and Serota realised that something radical must be done about the

Tate's woeful inability to display more than 10 per cent of its collection: "How could we say to a collector, 'we'd love you to give us your Matisses', when we couldn't even promise them a permanent showcase?"

After much research a momentous split was decided on, leaving the historic British collection at Millbank and housing 20th-century international art in a separate building. Several metropolitan sites were considered, at Smithfield, King's Cross, Nine Elms and Jubilee Gardens near the Festival Hall. "Then Francis Carnwath, the Tate's deputy director, alerted us to the Bankside building," Stevenson's initial reaction was sceptical: "It was the longest-odds runner, a real wild card. I still have to pinch myself that we chose it. There we were, planning to create one of the world's greatest museums of modern art in a dirty old power station!"

Before long, though, the Bankside building was found to be structurally sound. Its commanding position directly opposite St Paul's was immensely attractive, and plenty of space surrounded it for future expansion. "The urban regeneration of Southwark added a very strong card," says Stevenson, "and Nick realised that artists didn't particularly like custom-built galleries designed by contemporary architects. We decided to go ahead with Bankside two years before the Government introduced the National Lottery, so the Tate was well-prepared when the time came to apply for a £50 million grant."

Now, as the metamorphosis of Bankside reaches its final

phase, Stevenson feels "robustly confident. We've raised all but £20 million of our side of the money, and I'm not worried about the rest. Of course, if I want to lose sleep at night, I can." The problem of finding extra funds should not be underestimated, and it has been a central challenge throughout Stevenson's time at the Tate.

"The role of chairman in national museums has changed dramatically over the last ten years," he says. "They've become far bigger and much less dependent on government finance. Bankside and Millbank may well end up attracting five or six million visitors a year. So far, we have kept free admission and kept solvent as well. I'm proud of that. But the real issue is this: will the Government be prepared to go on funding an ever-expanding situation at the Tate?"

Stevenson cannot expect to receive an answer before he retires. But he does know how much pleasure the chairmanship has given him. "The Tate used to be a battleground between trustees and directors," he points out. "Because the gallery is often on the cutting edge of art, the trustees come under pressure. A lot of people still hate the Turner Prize, so you need to be very robust and supportive, and have confidence in the director."

Stevenson's close rapport with Serota has been the key factor in their success: "I hope Nick would say that we've had a completely transparent relationship, based on open trust." The Tate was lucky to have Stevenson, and he will retain a strong connection by continuing to serve as chairman of the Tate Gallery Foundation, the main umbrella body for the private fundraising on which the future growth of the institution depends.

So far, we have kept free admission and kept solvent as well

Branching out

CONCERT

English Sinfonia/Tovey Festival Hall

EVER mindful of the march of the tree surgeon and the property developer, I had been feeling rather warmly disposed towards Michael Nyman's new piece, *Strong on Oaks*, *Strong on the Causes of Oaks*. But anyone who, like me, was naively imagining an eco-prop soundtrack, circling with notated age-rings and multigrain ostinati, was in for a cruel shock. This was, in fact, a 15-minute, five-movement *Suite for Stevenage*.

Obvious when you come to think of it. For a start, that is where the English Sinfonia, presenting the work's world premiere, is stationed as orchestra-in-residence. And — serve you right for forgetting your Anglo-Saxon — Stevenage or, more precisely, Sithenaece, means "Strong Oak". So there it is, Bramwell Tovey, introducing and conducting the work, made quite a case for it all, especially as he seemed to be more impressed by the town's Indian restaurants and bowling alleys than by its arboriculture.

This, though, is definitely pastoral Nyman. *Oaks* is really an affable and bucolic dance suite, beginning with the gentle lilt of wide-set strings, bringing to the surface the composer's early love of 16th-century English rounds and folk music. Several short "stanzas", like little round dances, their rhythms dislocated by chiming trumpets and paunchy horns, give way

to a second movement in which a rustle of oscillating string figures alternates with a strident, syncopated dance. Then more syncopated rhythmic patterns, zig-zagging one across another in a third dance, before a lark-rise of a violin introduces the fourth movement with its sudden moments of calm before a final, jubilant knees-up, led by timpani and skirling piccolo.

Instrumental textures and dynamic levels mingle here with greater subtlety than in much of Nyman's music. But for real rhythmic thrills, syncopations which really reach the gut: for true mastery of orchestration and authentic unpredictability, try Malcolm Arnold's *English Dances*. The First and Second Sets followed the Nyman, and ensured generous applause.

In what was virtually a self-contained alternative concert in the first half, the English Sinfonia gave a respectful account of Schubert's *Rosamunde Overture*, and John Lill offered his usual lucid performance of Rachmaninov's Second Piano Concerto.

HILARY FINCH

Opens today at cinemas across the country

Arab Strap are partial to a drink – and girls. So that's the subject-matter for their songs sorted out...



"It's embarrassing," says Malcolm Middleton of Aidan Moffat's lyrics. "They're all about people we know." "Aye," Moffat says. "You have to make your own amusement"

Sex and the single-minded

We are in the pub with Arab Strap; something Arab Strap do all the time. It's a dark, cracked Victorian pub around the corner from Radio 1, all maroon leather and broken jukebox. It's the sort of pub they prefer. "It's not stupid or new, with plywood cacuses or robotic drinks trolleys, or anything," Aidan Moffat says with approval, his moustache frosted with Carlsberg.

Moffat, Arab Strap's lyricist, has a white-bread moon face, eyes all liquid with a life's pub-sorrow. Nonetheless, he has that reassuring drinker's buoyancy that comes from realising one can live a whole life in the pub, and not miss out on a single human experience.

Malcolm Middleton, the Strap's composer, sits opposite him: a pale, rainy Celtic redhead with a tender lower lip. He looks like a 14-year-old boy who's been forced to grow a goatee.

After a return trip to the bar, Moffat has his pint halfway to his lips when his mobile phone rings. A look of alarm takes over his face. He obviously hates his mobile phone. He is convinced that it's giving him a brain tumour and he can't talk on the thing without feeling as though he is the yuppier yuppie in the world. And they don't really have yuppies in Falkirk.

He answers it like one would answer a ringing lion and holds it an inch from his ear, a look of abject embarrassment on his face. Thirty

seconds later, this turns to vague panic. He shakes the phone a little. Stares at it. Gives a growling sigh.

"The battery's running down, right," he says, putting the phone back down on the table. "So all I heard was 'Moffat – bad news. I'm not going to be able to... and then it died.'"

"They can't get tickets on the train, can they?" Middleton asks. "We're not going to get home, are we?"

Moffat looks out of the window. Middleton looks across to the bar. Pub in Falkirk, Pub in London. Does it make any difference? "I'll get

another pint in, then," Moffat says, standing up.

Arab Strap are the sound of small towns, pub-life and rain. *Philophobia*, their new album (reviewed by David Sinclair on page 35), is the longest wet day since Blue Nile's *Hats*, or American Music Club's *Everclear*. As is the case with rainy albums, *Philophobia*, on first listen, is like watching drizzle through a window – seamless, endless, loveless rain.

But when you engage with it, and walk out into its watery world, you start noticing the Monet purples and greys of its wet pavements; tiny glowing scraps of guitar, like luminous lichens; the way that ceaseless rain makes the air sweet and strong, like cider. Flung over on this ciderous air, Moffat mutters his pub-life tales like a man who has just had desultory, sofa-bound sex and then missed his last bus home.

As with all small towns, the only escape is through sex – both figuratively and literally in Falkirk's case. As it is halfway between Edinburgh and Glasgow, getting to the

standing there, going "Fwwwwwwshhhh!" Middleton squeezes his head between his hands. "It's embarrassing as well, because they're all about people we know, and Falkirk's very small."

"Aye, you have to make your own amusement," Moffat nods. "We've made up our own language, too. Rekkii. Chin. Hoojoo."

"Hoojoo is a derogatory term for anyone who's not with us," Middleton explains. "I know a boy from Falkirk who can speak Klingon," Moffat chips in. "He also read James Herbert's *Dune*, and learnt all the words from that and ran them together and made a language there, too. He was talking some absolute pish."

"Still a nice guy, though," Middleton nods. A thought strikes him, and he fidgets a little. "Do you think we might get home tonight? See, the thing about Falkirk is the same with everyone's home town. You hate it while you're there, but you kind of miss it when you're away."

He stares at Moffat, and says, as if it had only just occurred to him, "We could go down the pub."

● *Philophobia* is released on Monday by Chemikal Underground



CAITLIN MORAN

big city is easy: £3 and 20 minutes on the train. Should you fail to pull, however, it's a sobering £20 cab ride back home. Financial prudence, if nothing else, dictates you put it about a bit.

Lyrically, Arab Strap are the Falkirk Evening News – the XXX edition. As Falkirk is made up of a bowling alley no-one goes to, a Laser Quest and 12 pubs, of which only three are "ones you'd wish to set foot in", the only news is gossip, and the only gossip is Who's Done Who.

Blowing up a saxophone storm

JAZZ
Gilad Atzmon
Vortex, N16

THE advance publicity promised a "fiery saxophone phenomenon... powerful and passionate", and from the moment Gilad Atzmon launched himself into the solo alto introduction to his first number, the Silvers/Van Heusen classic *Nancy with the Laughing Face*, it was clear that he was determined to live up to his billing.

Even luxuriating in the familiar changes of this tenderest of ballads – it was, after all, originally written for Frank Sinatra's four-year-old daughter – Atzmon peppered his playing with breathless double-time flurries, soaring cries and swooping runs.

The Thelonious Monk-inspired *Monkey Business*, a suitably quirky original blues, proved an inspired choice for Atzmon's follow-up number. It showcased not only pianist Phil Mead's sty delicacy and drummer Sam Brown's tightly controlled rumbustiousness in the concluding fours-trading with his leader, but also an Atzmon trademark: his ability to transform himself into an instant saxophone section. The sight of a man playing two saxophones simultaneously inevitably conjures up memories of Roland Kirk, but unlike the late American, Atzmon restricts himself to playing brief harmonised riffs on tenor and alto, beeping up his quartet's sound considerably in the process.

Another great American saxophonist, John Coltrane, was brought to mind by Atzmon's next couple of numbers. In the first, the old Victor

Young/Ned Washington warhorse *Stella by Starlight*, it was the saxophonist's eagerness to shed the harmonic restrictions of Mead's piano and Simon Thorpe's bass, so that he could explore the tune's outer limits in duo with Brown, that summoned the great man's shade; in the second, a tricky original in 7/8, appropriately titled *In a Sentimental Mood*, the same function was performed by Atzmon's open acknowledgement of his soprano sound's debt to Coltrane.

A murderously fast *Secret Love* and a surprisingly adventurous clarinet version of Duke Ellington's *In a Sentimental Mood*, which somehow succeeded in incorporating a brief, sour visit to the national anthem, concluded the quartet's first set. Their second provided more of the same: a hurtle through *Lower*, a couple of burning alto ballads, a funky blues shuffle and a delightfully eccentric clarinet visit to *A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square*.

With an alto sound that somehow contrives to combine the blustering agility of Sonny Criss with the brooding, soulful accessibility of Art Porter, Atzmon is a highly welcome addition to the British jazz scene.

CHRIS PARKER

Steaming with Southern passion

BLUES
Johnny Rawls
and Deitra Farr
100 Club, W1

IT WAS the outfit that was the giveaway. When Johnny Rawls walked on stage immaculately clad in a pastel yellow top, matching trousers and a pair of patent leather shoes you knew that this was not going to be an evening of straightahead Chicago blues.

While there is still a strong market for the traditional, Muddy Waters-inspired music among mainly white audiences, Rawls is a prime example of the soul blues performer, an artist popular in the lounge and supper club "chillin' circuit" in the States whose records still sell in large quantities to black buyers.

It is a genre which combines the earthiness of a B.B. King with the Memphis soul of an Al Green to create songs about cheating men, cheap women and dark, illicit passions.

And it is a style which Rawls carries off superbly. He is blessed with a rich, caressing voice which gives a new edge to his strong, self-composed tales of marital misdeeds, such as *Can't Nobody and It's All In The Game*. He was aided by a two-piece brass section, which bolstered that Southern soul aspect of most of his songs. Mind you, when he wanted too, Rawls – who was born in Mississippi – showed that he was no mean guitar picker, with effective choppy and staccato guitar runs on numbers such as *I Don't Want No Woman Tyin' Me Down*.

But with the appearance of Deitra Farr, wearing what

appeared to be her Sunday best frock and hat, we were back to a musical battle of the sexes. Although her normally strong voice was diminished by a cold, she was able to give as good as she got as she and Rawls performed a couple of knockabout duets that brought back memories of Otis Redding and Carla Thomas's *Tramp*.

The fast tempo *I Refuse to Lose* came with a plea to the "ladies in the house" of which, to be honest, there weren't that many, while *This I Know To Be True* had a jaunty, almost reggae-type backing from Rawls and his six-piece band. But it was the bluesy Rawls-penned title track of Farr's debut album *The Search Is Over* which justly got the biggest audience response for this Chicago-based singer.

It is a brave move by record company boss and promoter John Steadman to bring over artists who don't necessarily fit into the mainstream of the British blues scene, and one for which he deserves our thanks. Now all we need to go with these tales of steamy Southern passion is the appropriate weather.

JOHN CLARKE

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CHANGING TIMES

A many-pointed star is born

NEW JAZZ ALBUMS

TRICIA TAHARA
Secrets (Savant SCD 2006)
CLASSICALLY trained, but with a stint at Berklee's jazz academy behind her as well as equally valuable "life" experience gained selling real estate and rebuilding sports cars, Tricia Tahara has one of the purest, most affecting voices to emerge in recent years.

Combining the smooth jazz sophistication of Carmen Lundy with the tempered-steel soulfulness of Anita Baker or Randy Crawford, she is also a skilled and thoughtful lyricist, adding unusually cogent words on this album to Wayne Shorter's *Footprints* and Herbie Hancock's *Butterfly*.

She blends superbly with a close-knit group comprising pianist Geri Allen, trumpeter Wallace Roney (a Berklee classmate of Tahara's), saxophonist Antoine Roney, bassist Ralphie Armstrong and drummer/producer Lenny White. Whether she's bringing unusual emotional resilience to an intriguing minor-key visit to You are My Sunshine, exercising her lyric soprano on an aria from Boito's *Mefistofele* or imbuing carefully selected popular songs with heartfelt wistfulness, Tahara is a talent to watch.

RUSSELL GUNN
Gunn Fu (HighNote HCD 7003)
WITH his pun-friendly surname, trumpeter Russell Gunn can look forward to coining many variations on the title of his debut album (*Young Gunn*). But in this particular case, the somewhat strained reference to martial arts is wholly appropriate: agility and balance, coupled with controlled aggression, are the hallmarks of his music.

His band – mustard-keen young players such as saxophonist/flautist Greg Tardy, vibes player Stefan Harris and the wonderfully pungent, dynamic pianist James Hurt, plus a rhythm section of bassist Eric Reeves and drummer Ali Jackson – gives him sterling support throughout the album.

But it is Gunn's fierce, ringing tones on the bustling post-bop selections and his sweet plangency on the odd ballad that grab and retain the attention throughout this highly accomplished album.

CHRIS PARKER

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Jazz on a Summers day and night

The former Police guitarist tells David Sinclair why the charts he now cares about are musical ones

The first that Andy Summers knew about his participation in Puff Daddy's massive hit *I'll Be Missing You* last year was when he heard his own guitar part playing back at him on the radio. The rap number was explicitly based on the Police's 1983 song, *Every Breath You Take*, a prominent sample of which had been sanctioned by the group's record company, with the permission of Sting, who wrote the song. But neither Summers nor the former Police drummer Stewart Copeland was consulted beforehand and, as Summers is quick to point out, "my guitar is the only thing from the original recording that you can actually hear on the Puff Daddy record."

It would be nice if the Police got back together again

The guitarist was not greatly impressed by Daddy's effort. "Musically, it's very corny. I laughed when I heard it," he says. And he has carried on laughing all the way to the bank. "I'm still waiting for my royalties to come through, but it's sold eight million copies, so it should be a good year." Summers also has plenty of other, more artistically satisfying, reasons to be cheerful.

Never a man to let the grass grow under his feet, he has just released his tenth album since the Police lapsed into inactivity in 1986. *The Last Dance Of Mr X* is a sophisticated collection of jazz standards, including masterful performances of Wayne Shorter's *The Three Marias* and *Footprints*, Charles Mingus's *Goodbye Pork Pie Hat* and Thelonius Monk's *We See*, combined with Summers's own compositions, ranging from the twinkling abstractions of *Strange Earth* to the more forceful fusion of *Big Thing*. Accompanied for the most part by Tony Levin (bass) and Gregg Bissonette (drums), it is the first album featuring Summers in a trio format since he was with the Police. However, one of several major differences this time around is that there is no singing.

"I don't want to stand behind a singer and play chords any more," Summers says. "I want to play my instrument fully. I want to be a full-on improviser and take these pieces and see where I can go with them. I'm not someone who's withdrawn and doesn't like the spotlight. I feel completely capable of holding centre stage. I thrive on all the attention and the adoration." Never in danger of becoming a victim of his own success, Summers has always maintained an aloof sense of cool, even at the height of the madness that surrounded the Police. For one thing, he was



"I don't want to stand behind a singer and play chords any more," Andy Summers says. "I want to be a full-on improviser and take pieces and see where I can go with them"

significantly older than most musicians who become pop pin-ups. An early Police anthem may have proclaimed that they were *Born in the Fifties*, but Summers was actually born in 1942, making him older than Mick Jagger. He grew up in Bourneville in London, where he played in

various groups including Zoot Money's Big Roll Band, and counted members of the 1960s rock aristocracy such as Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck and Jimmy Page among his peers. But after stints in Soft Machine and the New Animals, Summers took a four-year sabbatical from rock'n'roll to study classical guitar at North Ridge

University in California. He had returned to Britain by the time punk got under way, and Summers is the first to admit that when he hooked up with Copeland and Sting in 1977 he was "overqualified for the gig — we all were. But the connection between us was incredible. It was the right three guys. We were all pretty smart, we

had a lot of ego and we could play. We saw our chance and we went for it." The marketing of the Police as a pop-rock crossover phenomenon, and the ensuing hoopla as they went on to become the biggest group in the world, tended to obscure their considerable talents as individual musicians.

"I never thought the greatest stuff we played as the Police ever got caught on record," Summers says. "It was always live. We always had these brilliant soundchecks where we would really stretch out; it always sounded so much better than the show." Even so, by the time he had finished with the Police Summers had become acutely aware of the limitations of rock and found himself itching to explore the broader instrumental horizons of jazz. His love of jazz goes back to his earliest days as a music fan when he listened in wonder to the guitar playing of Barney Kessel, Kenny Burrell and Wes Montgomery.

"Jazz music is a very complex, deep intellectual pursuit," he says. "It takes 20 years of study, at least, to really get the language. You have to study all the records and there's a huge amount of literature, and you have to play over time with the kind of guys who know it all."

Summers's albums sell about 50,000 copies each, which is good by jazz standards but peanuts compared with even a modestly successful rock act. "My records pay for themselves and I get a little bit out of it, but I wouldn't say I was making a living off this," he says equably, secure in the knowledge that *The Very Best of Sting and the Police*, released last November, has already notched up sales of three million.

"It would be nice if the Police got back together again, for many reasons," he says. "I'd like to do it, but I'm not making any calls. It's Sting who'd have to make the call, but I don't think he will."

● The Andy Summers Trio plays *Pizza Express*, London W1 (071-439 8722), from Monday to Saturday. *The Last Dance Of Mr X* is released by RCA Victor

JIMMY PAGE & ROBERT PLANT
Walking Into Clarksdale
(Mercury 558 025 £15.99)
YOU can question the validity, the propriety and even the sanity of a pair of wrinkled old rockers such as Jimmy Page and Robert Plant returning to the fray with their first collection of new songs written together since Led Zeppelin's *In Through the Out Door* was released in 1979. But there is no doubting the elegance and sheer vitality of *Walking Into Clarksdale*.

Although famous for their sun-gun riffs and chest-beating blues-rock anthems, Page and Plant have always been far more resourceful songwriters than the heavy metal acts they inspired. With age has come an added poignancy to their music, and on slow, reflective numbers such as *Blue Train* and the gorgeous *When I Was a Child*, Page's apparently casual approach to erecting the instrumental scaffolding combines with Plant's girlish way of flirting with a melody to produce a dark, sensual dynamic.

At the more brutal end of the spectrum, the title track is an explosive piece of Viking

rock'n'roll which finds Page bating riffs back and forth across a loping beat and Plant pouring out a breathlessly apocalyptic lyric about meeting "A stranger at the crossroads/I believe I've seen his face before".

The album is very much a team effort, with all songwriting credits shared equally between Page, Plant, bass player Charlie Jones and drummer Michael Lee, and a prominent "recorded and mixed by" credit going to sonic troublemaker Steve Albini (of Nirvana and P.J. Harvey fame). But it is Page and Plant who bring their distinctive touch of majesty to the proceedings and emerge with the lion's share of the glory.

NEW POP ALBUMS

MASSIVE ATTACK
Mezzanine
(Circa/Virgin 7243 8 45603 £15.99)
HAS there ever been such an obsessively claustrophobic and humourless musical genre as trip hop? Death

metal, Gothic rock, even gangsta rap all find room for elements of burlesque and black irony within their grim worldviews, while even the most moribund grunge acts were propelled by a certain core energy.

But no trace of levity or warmth is permitted to enter the paranoid fantasy world of Massive Attack, the Bristolian originators of trip hop and still its most credible purveyors. Listening to the dark, linear grooves on *Mezzanine*, the group's third album, is like wandering through a tunnel filled with ghostly, echoing voices and some grimy creature buzzing in the murk behind you.

Tailored for a market where music can never be too literal or conventional, this is an album not strong on subtlety or originality, but stuffed with potential hit singles.

ARAB STRAP
Philophobia
(Chemikal Underground/Vital CHEM2! £14.99)
THE title means "fear of falling in love", and it's the second album by Arab Strap, a pair of wasters from Falkirk whose other aversion seems to be to tunes. Their trick, in-

stead, is to paste the seedy, first-person narratives of Aidan Moffat, spoken in a broad, matter-of-fact, Scottish accent, over the slow-moving, achingly beautiful guitar motifs of Malcolm Middleton.

The net effect falls somewhere between the melancholy poise of the Cowboy Junkies and the poetic charm of the Blue Aeroplanes, with a hefty dose of gritty, northern realism à la Jarvis Cocker thrown in. "Too drunk and getting old," Moffat, aged 24, proclaims in *The Night Before The Funeral*, with all the world-weary despair of a man for whom adult life still beckons.

Whole lotta lovely

TOP TEN ALBUMS

1	(2)	Life Thru a Lens.....	Robbie Williams (Chrysalis)
2	(4)	Let's Talk About Love.....	Celine Dion (Epic)
3	(1)	The Best of.....	James (Fontana)
4	(3)	Titanic Soundtrack.....	James Horner (Sony Classical)
5	(5)	Ray of Light.....	Madonna (Maverick)
6	(7)	Urban Hymns.....	Verve (Jut)
7	(8)	This Is Hardcore.....	Pulp (Island)
8	(10)	In My Life.....	George Martin (Echo)
9	(11)	All Saints.....	All Saints (London)
10	(9)	Left of the Middle.....	Natalie Imbruglia (RCA)

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BILLIE MYERS
Growing Pains
(Universal UND 53100 £15.99)
THE question that springs to mind on first hearing Billie Myers — currently riding high in both Britain and America with her single *Kiss the Rain* — is why her, and not Lisa Loeb or Aimee Mann or any of half-a-dozen post-Alanis babes with a mild Chrissie Hynde fixation?

The answer is plain to hear on *Growing Pains*, the singer's debut album. Blessed with a strong, confident voice and a feel for the dynamics of American adult pop, the former insurance clerk from Coventry has bolted her straightforward lyrics on to sturdy arrangements to produce a collection of mainstream relationship songs painted in bold, primary emotional colours: "I want to die in your arms/That's my suicide wish".

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The world wants to take a walk on the wild side

Cable channels and cinema are queuing up to buy British natural history programmes, says Louise McElvogue

Will cinema-goers pay to see the BBC's finest natural history documentaries on the big screen? That is the question being pondered at the corporation's Natural History Unit (NHU) in Bristol, where a film version of its most expensive production — an eight-hour series on the world's oceans called *The Blue Planet* — is under consideration.

The NHU and Anglia's *Survival* series have been pumping out the world's best wildlife films for years, and British audiences can't seem to get enough of them. Now, it seems, the rest of the world has caught up, making natural history documentaries an increasingly valuable commodity.

Demand is coming from a growing number of documentary cable channels, such as Discovery, Animal Planet and National Geographic, as well as from television stations worldwide.

Even the mainstream American networks ABC, CBS, NBC and Fox, operating in the world's most competitive television market, are scheduling everything from blue-ribbon natural history specials to clip shows of animal maulings, known in the business as "fang television".

"There has been an acceptance of natural history as mainstream, and alongside it come formats which are less high-minded than we might like," says Greg Moyer, the president of Discovery Communications Inc and its chief editorial and creative officer. "Now it seems everyone and his brother is making a natural history 'snuff' film."

Natural history films represent a good ratings return on investment,

especially for television in the United States. When *Animals Attack*, which also found a home on Sky One in this country, won Fox TV 20 per cent of the 18 to 49-year-old audience for a budget of just \$500,000 an hour. An hour-long drama which could pull similar ratings in America would demand a budget of at least double that amount.

There is also a long-term return on natural history films because of the ease with which they play in any country and their long shelf-life. Unlike dramas or comedies, it is not difficult to dub speaking roles, there are no contractual problems with talent, and the subjects do not date.

A number of recent deals reflect the growing demand for these documentaries. The BBC's \$600 million deal with Discovery Communications, which was signed last month, is largely driven by the valuable library and productions of the Natural History Unit, which will feed cable channels owned by the joint venture. United News and Media's distribution arm ITTEL sold Discovery a huge, 180-hour package of *Survival* programming to launch its Animal Planet channel in America last year.

Meanwhile, Fox (a sister company of this newspaper), which is best known in the wildlife business as the home of the animal specials *When Animals Attack*, recently signed a multi-million dollar deal to buy Television New Zealand's prestigious Natural History Unit. The library will help to feed the National Geographic Channels which Fox is helping to launch with



Face to face with a penguin in Antarctica: wildlife programmes are relatively inexpensive to make, and there seems to be an inexhaustible demand from viewers

NBC and National Geographic Television.

These cable and satellite channels, which need many hours of documentaries to feed their airtime, have been the main pressure on the price of wildlife programming.

Discovery, a privately-held company based near Washington DC, which relied heavily on British and Australian documentaries when it launched in 1985, could barely afford the \$1,000 (£625) an hour that the BBC charged to licence it to US cable. Now Discovery pays an average of \$100,000 for a BBC hour, and in 12 years it has built a documentary cable network with an annual turnover of \$360 million.

But now Discovery is facing significant competition from National Geographic Television, a spin-off of the successful magazine, and the American network NBC, which have joined in National Geographic Channels (NGC). NGC has already launched channels in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia and Scandinavia.

Despite all this television activity, the big screen continues to have an allure. *The Blue Planet* — the BBC's definitive series on the world's oceans, which will cost £7 million — could be released as a feature film.

Mark Reynolds, the business manager for the NHU at BBC Worldwide, says: "After the success of the documentary *Microcosmos* in cinemas last year, we began to look at a 90-minute feature film version of *The Blue Planet*. Though funding a feature has not been approved, the NHU is hoping that the spectacular footage from *The Blue Planet*, which is still in development, could be used for a film release six to nine months before the series is first shown on television in 2001."

Hollywood is also becoming more interested in the wildlife business. Peter Guber, the former chairman of Sony Pictures, established Mandalay Media Arts in September, which has grand ambitions to produce documentaries

using high-definition television equipment for television, IMAX and feature films. Launched with two industry veterans — the underwater cameraman Al Giddings, who shot many of the scenes in the movie *Titanic*, and the producer Barry Clark — Mandalay wants to attract film-makers with its top-of-the-line equipment.

National Geographic and Discovery have not waited for Hollywood to come to them, making their own inroads into the movie business. National Geographic's feature film division has announced its first project on the life of the late marine adventurer Jacques Cousteau, while the Discovery channel released its first feature film, *The Leopard Son*, in 1996, with middling results. Discovery has also branched out into publishing, new media and even retail stores.

Attracting film-making talent in this genre is becoming a difficult

task. "There is still too much money chasing too few film-makers," according to Paul Sowerbutts, the deputy chief executive of ITEL. He says *Survival*, along with the BBC, is looking for ways to improve training and encourage new talent in the field.

New film-makers must compete with the huge demand for the pool of talent at the top. This group of 15-20 film-makers, including behind-the-camera legends such as Wolfgang Bayer, Alan Root and Hugh and Sue Miles, have the luxury of making what they want, when they want.

Finally, the financial rewards for such film-makers are also catching up. Wolfgang Bayer achieved his status not just because of his spectacular film-making history, but also because of the deal he pulled off with Discovery, which brought 510 hours of his out-take footage for \$5 million.

Some film-makers are concerned at the growing violence and dumbing-down of natural history

films. The veteran producer-director Alan Root said at a recent industry convention that many shows around the world were little more than "Baywatch with fur". There has also been an increase in films on "charismatic mega-fauna" — big animals such as elephant and lion, which draw large ratings — and there are few new ways to shoot the top subjects, which include sharks, zebras and monkeys.

British productions, however, continue to experiment with a range of innovative natural history films. Though the media mogul Ted Turner had to ask the BBC's Sir David Attenborough what on earth the plants did for six hours in the *Private Life of Plants* series, he still forked out \$1.5 million for one third of the budget of the series in 1994.

Similarly, one of the classics of the genre remains a *Survival* Anglia feature from Alan Root called *Castles of Clay*. Its subjects — termites.

Will these ads come to the BBC?

The once heretical idea of ads on the BBC has reared its head once more as a result of the frustration Britain's leading advertisers feel with what they regard as an over-expensive and intransigent ITV.

The Incorporated Society of British Advertisers (ISBA), the advertisers' trade body, has lobbied the Government through two channels this year already. First, there was a meeting with Chris Smith, Secretary for Culture, Media and Sport. Next, a letter from the ISBA's director-general John Hooper last month to Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, floating the idea of the Central Office of Information being allowed to place some of the Government's own advertising (Army recruitment, anti-drink-drive, Welfare to Work) with the corporation.

It is not a new suggestion, but the current debate about advertising airtime inflation has put the subject back on the agenda. Advertiser demand is an important cause of this inflation. Taking demand out of the mix, so the argument goes, should help to ease inflation.

The combined television advertising spend of the COI, the Health Education Authority (Aids and drugs awareness, among others) and government departments which bypass the COI is about £40 million a year, representing just 1.5 per cent of commercial television's total revenue of £2.6 billion. Advocates of such a move,



THE LAST THING SHE WANTS TO SEE IS MORE SOLDIERS

Army recruitment advertising such as this may be accepted for screening by the BBC

Stefano Hatfield on the impending fall of the last taboo

including David Cuff, of Initiative Media, which buys airtime for Unilever and Peugeot-Citroën among others, insist that "every little helps". But cynics might suggest the inflation issue is simply a means of establishing the principle of advertising on the Beeb.

Which is where the letter to Mr Brown comes in. ISBA has hit upon an idea that seems to appeal to the Government — linking a mixed funding formula for the corporation with the potential for taking disadvantaged groups such as pensioners and the blind out of the licence equation.

Cuff claims that four minutes of ads per night either side of the evening news could generate £79 million a year — clearly more than the COI has to spend. ISBA's director of media policy, Bob Wootton, asks how many people could be freed from the licence burden if the Beeb raised, say, £300 million a year.

Wootton points out that there are already public service information films on the BBC on subjects varying from licence fee evasion to fire and crime prevention. He also argues that there are natural programme breaks filled by ads (under the

guise of trailers) for the BBC. This sticks in the throat of advertisers, who say that because of this self-promotion, commercial television and the BBC do not compete on a level playing field.

They point to the UK's unique position among First World economies, where the public service broadcaster takes almost half of the television audience. This cuts off half the potential audience for their ads. If the BBC isn't shackled, then they want access to its audience.

The BBC's stock response is: it's our airtime and we have a duty to promote our services.

And our uniqueness stems from the £1.9 billion raised by the licence fee.

Jane Frost, the BBC's head of corporate marketing, says: "The BBC and the licence payer should not suffer for the failure of ITV. We're caught up in somebody else's fight."

Amid all the lobbying, it seems nobody has asked the COI what it thinks. "It would have been a little more courteous and helpful if ISBA had had a full discussion with all the parties concerned," Peter Buchanan, the COI's director of advertising, says pointedly. "We could not welcome anything that would make government advertising less effective."

He declines to draw on the subject, precisely because the COI has not been consulted to date. But it is clear the COI would resist any attempt to force it off commercial television into single advertiser ghetto breaks, even during BBC prime time.

The COI knows it is being used as that Trojan Horse. What Britain's advertisers, led by Procter & Gamble and Unilever, really want is a BBC that airs their ads. Both the BBC and the commercial television companies will fight any such moves tooth and nail. But, suddenly, the idea does not seem as heretical as it once was. Expect to hear a lot more about pensioners and the blind.

Stefano Hatfield is the editor of Campaign.

Vendetta threatens to silence a proud voice

Guatemala's leading news magazine faces closure. Tunku Varadarajan explains why

I have just returned from Guatemala. And I bring bad news. Unlike the gruesome days of old, the news is not of massacres or civil war. It is this: the country's leading news magazine, *Crónica*, a proud and perky publication with a reputation for cosmopolitan intelligence, is about to close. It is being forced out of business by Alvaro Arzú, the country's democratically elected President, who is determined to punish it for a campaign of criticism against him by leaning on advertisers to abandon the magazine.

The badness of the news, if truth be told, is relative, and illustrates in a perverse way the extent to which Guatemala has stumbled down the path of democracy. Yet there is no small amount of irony in the case of *Crónica*. Francisco Pérez de Antón, the magazine's owner, says: "It used to be they killed journalists. Now it seems they kill the medium."

There is no doubt that the magazine is hostile towards Señor Arzú. Every week it carries items that find fault with his administration, editorials deplore his "inefficiencies", columns suggest how he might do a better job. Señor Arzú, however, betraying a thinness of skin that sits ill on a newly democratic body, has interpreted this criticism as "war". The magazine says the President has leant on his friends in the Guatemalan business sector and asked them to pull their advertisements. Although he denies the charge, few in the country believe him. Carlos Morales, the magazine's business editor, says: "We used to have 25 full-page ads a week. Now we have ten. It's sometimes 13. It can't be because we're a bad place in which to advertise. After all, we sell 15,000 copies a week, more than any other magazine in Guatemala. The whole thing is political... it is a blockade."

Haroldo Shetemul, the Editor, is in no doubt that the President is waging a kind of guerrilla war against *Crónica* and scoffs at the Government's assertion that "the magazine is going broke because of financial mismanagement". In an editorial last month — run, unusually, on the front cover

— Señor Shetemul described the President's "blockade" as a "crime that leaves no fingerprints". He wrote: "Ever since Arzú took power, he has been determined to establish political control over information. Having failed to do so, he has gone in for underground warfare... *Crónica* has suffered an assault from his termites. Nothing has stopped them. Not the constitution, not the laws, not the most elementary decency. His aim is to close us down."

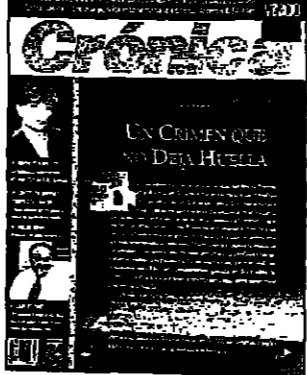
"This government-press confrontation is not an ideological operation [but] a personal obsession [of Señor Arzú], a phobia."

The magazine is not waging a lone battle, however. Leader-writers on other Guatemalan newspapers, sensing that a threat to *Crónica* today is a potential menace to other papers tomorrow, have thrown their weight behind Señor Shetemul. On March 25, the International Federation of Journalists announced that it would file a complaint on the magazine's behalf with the UN's Human Rights Commission in Geneva. On the same day, the Inter-American Press Association asked Señor Arzú to "use his authority" to stop the government pressure

on *Crónica*. Six days later, Julio Eduardo Arango, the national human rights prosecutor, declared that the President was "violating the right to free expression by pressuring prominent news organisations".

Señor Arango called for "the rapid restoration of the right that has been violated" and criticised a government memorandum banning official advertisements in *Crónica*. In addition, he criticised the Government's in-house order that none of its officials should ever grant an interview to the magazine. But his exhortations are not legally binding on the President.

Crónica, reeling from the diklat, is losing \$20,000 (£12,000) per week. The owners have said that if full advertising is not restored soon, then they will be left with no choice but to close, perhaps by the end of this month. If that happens, Guatemala will lose not only an eloquent voice, but it will also forfeit much of its democratic credibility.



Crónica: critical situation

DANNY KELLY exudes the enthusiasm of a small child when talking about his latest project. *Football365*, a free, daily, online football newspaper. *Naomi Marks* writes.

Kelly, a 40-year-old journalist and broadcaster, half of the irreverent Talk Radio duo Baker and Kelly, and the presenter of Channel 4's *Under the Moon*, is the launch editor of *Empag's Total Sport*. Now he is staking his reputation on the Website, which will be launched next week. Taking advantage of the latest technology to feed

Internet soccer kicks in

personalised editions of the publication direct to desktops. *Football365* is the first in a series of planned sites under the 365 brand.

Kelly is not the only one putting his reputation on the line. The concept was developed by David Tabizel, an Internet expert. Dan Thompson, the founder of Renegade Software, and Simon Morris, former managing director at Chris Evans's Ginger Produc-

tions, to form Direct Network Publishing (DNP). Sky Sports anchorman Andy Gray and Nick Alexander, the chief executive of Pearson New Entertainment, are non-executive directors.

So far, Kelly says, things are looking good. Two months after putting a registration page online, *Football365* has registrations in more than 90 countries. Soccer is, of course, ideal Web

subject matter. The Net's user profile, chiefly young and male, matches the average fan.

Football365 is ambitious in content. Kelly says it will be packed with original, Net-tailored editorial and combine the virtues of a daily newspaper (all the football news you could want, with those of a soccer magazine (features and froth refreshed every few days), and a good

local newspaper (detailed information about the club of your choice).

Thompson, DNP's chief executive, expects revenue to come from advertising, sponsorship and a subscription service. But the biggest money-spinner is expected to be in the growing area of "e-commerce", or online shopping. Thompson refuses to say when he expects *Football365* to become profitable, but there are already plans for sites based on other subjects.

Football365 is at www.football365.co.uk

سكزا من الاصل

'I don't have the anger I had as a doctor'

Successful television dramatists usually spend their formative years sweating over endless episodes of *Brookside* or *The Bill* before being offered their own series. Not so Jed Mercurio, the enfant terrible of television fiction, who in four years has emerged as one of Britain's most sought-after screenwriters.

The story of his success is a legend in the industry. In 1994 Mercurio was a senior house officer at a hospital in the Midlands earning about £23,000 a year. His only experience of writing for an audience was contributing a couple of sketches to the medical review, "The usual tasteless, pathetic crap," he says.

Today his workload includes writing and producing a bad-taste sitcom for ITV, *The Grimleys*, set in 1975 and starring Noddy Holder as himself; *Trauma One*, a Channel 4 series that aspires to be the British answer to *ER*; several feature film projects; and a new, six-part sci-fi thriller, *Invasion Earth*, which he co-produced. The latter, budgeted at about £6 million, claims to be the most ambitious drama ever made by BBC Scotland and will be shown on BBC1 in early May.

Mercurio's earnings are now comfortably in six-figures and it's all thanks to the success of *Cardiac Arrest*, his mordant, warts-and-all BBC1 medical saga. Like *Z Cars* 30 years before, *Cardiac Arrest* took a great British institution and laid bare its caring, infallible image.

In Mercurio's version of life inside a fictional inner-city hospital, the young medics were sexually promiscuous and often medically incompetent. Inevitably the programme, which ran for three series before Mercurio fell out with the producer, incurred the wrath of Virginia Bottomley, the then Health Secretary.

She complained that *Cardiac Arrest* was more akin to a *Carry On* film than an authentic portrayal of life inside a modern NHS establishment. But the furor endeared the series to the critics and an industry that thrives on being provocative. In fact, *Cardiac Arrest* brought a freshness and frankness to the clichéd conventions of the

After Cardiac Arrest, Jed Mercurio, gave up medicine and is now a successful scriptwriter. Interview: Steve Clarke

contemporary television drama series and helped pave the way for last year's cult hit *This Life*, also made by the independent company Island World, under the supervision of the veteran drama producer Tony Garnett.

The programme gave Mercurio, then in his mid-20s, the confidence to discard his stethoscope for good. "When I wrote the first series of *Cardiac Arrest* I was an angry young man," he says. "But once you've been to Groucho's a couple of times that gets kicked out of you."

This may be. But at the ripe old age of 31, Mercurio, whose blokish, down-to-earth manner belies all stereotypes of the professional writer, still prides himself on being something of an outsider in an incestuous world where networking counts for every thing. His family are first-generation Italian immigrants; Mercurio's father worked as a coal miner in Lancashire before moving into management. When Mercurio isn't working, which is most of the time, you can imagine him sprawled out on a sofa at his London flat watching the football, beer in hand.

Unlike many television dramatists, who regard the box as an inferior medium to the theatre, he appears to love the small screen. It may sound disingenuous, but he says he only writes material that he and his peer group would want to sit down and watch themselves.

"I've got to be enthusiastic about an idea as a viewer before I would even think about making it," he says. "It always comes back to what do I want to watch. That's the gap that I look for in the TV landscape. I learn a lot from watching different kinds of TV. You're always working

when you're watching, looking at camera shots, the denouement of a story, how a scene is structured. I watch a lot of TV, especially American series such as *The X-Files* and *ER*. There's a slickness and a pace to American drama that a lot of ours doesn't have. We do a lot of detective shows that are intended to be very leisurely.

"They work very well for their audience but I'm not part of that audience. What I've learnt is that the programmes that I make appeal to people like me - 15 to 35-year-olds who want a bit more urgency." Such a direct relationship with his audience may help explain Mercurio's success. In any case, he regards himself as more than just a writer. "I'm a programme maker, not a writer. I can write scripts but I think a lot of the demarcation lines between writing, producing and directing are false in the way that I like to work with directors and producers who help me to improve my scripts. I think it's perfectly okay that I talk to directors about how they're shooting and to producers about how they're producing."

"I am not telling the director how to shoot, it's just that writers tend to be excluded from things. There is a danger that if one person writes, produces and directs there will be a loss of objectivity, but I've got no intention of being the sole creative force in a TV experience."

He admits that as a young writer he still has much to learn but it is tempting to interpret Mercurio's confidence as arrogance. His self-assurance (learnt at medical school, perhaps) is remarkable and probably played a part in the clash with Garnett that led to the premature end of *Cardiac Arrest*. "It is

not something that I want to comment on," he says of the bust-up. "Let's just say that I'm glad I moved on."

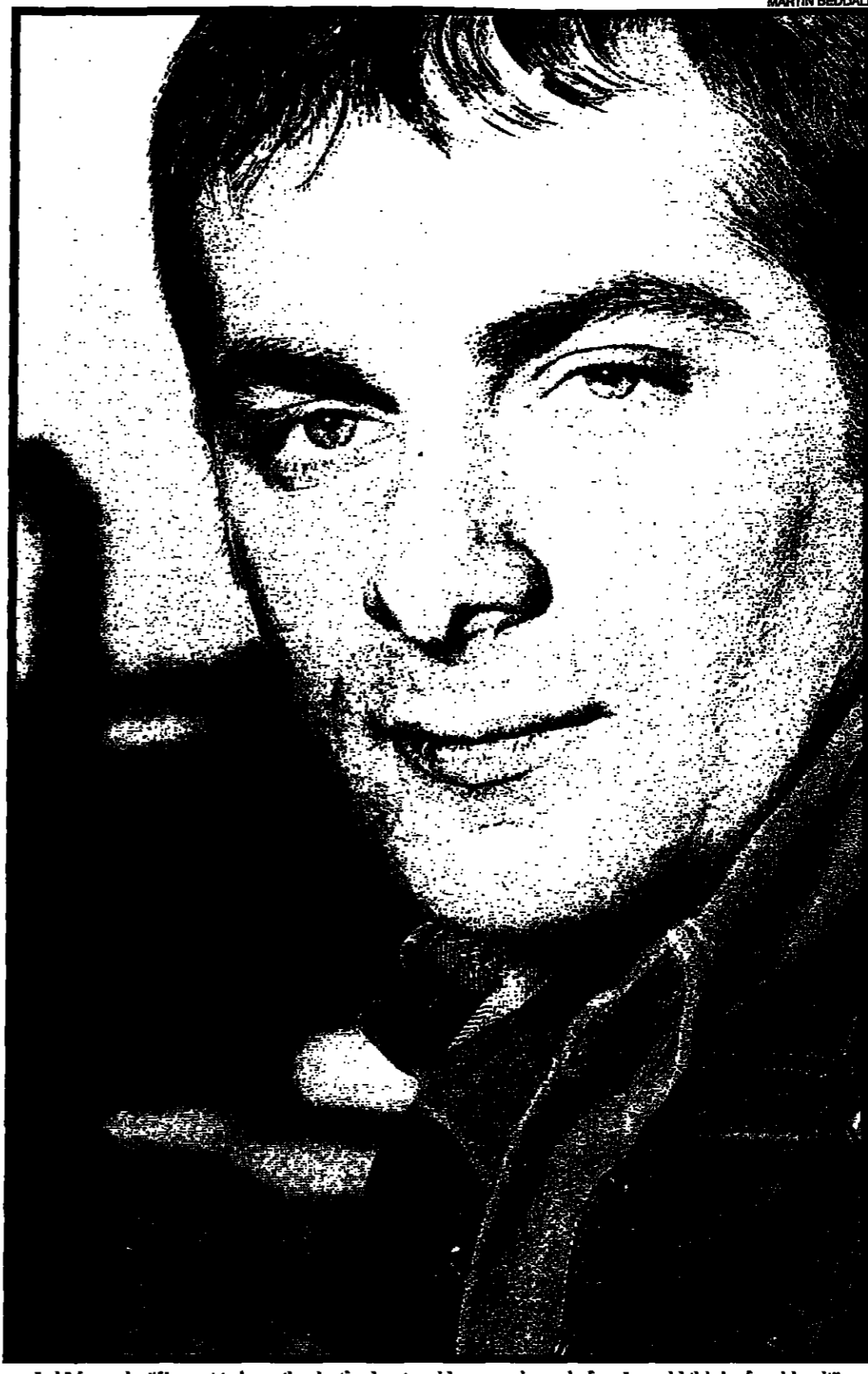
For a writer, Mercurio is unusual in that so far every television script he has ever submitted has been made. Yet, if he is to make genuinely serious money, he will need to create an international best-seller that runs and runs. This is clearly the intention behind *Invasion Earth*, a co-production with the American Sci-Fi Channel.

While the plot is ingenious in portraying two alien communities at war with one another, neither the acting or direction is of the same high calibre as *Cardiac Arrest*. Much of the dialogue is also extremely wooden.

It is difficult to do a film of this kind within television budgets, and too many of the special effects recall *Dr Who* at its creakiest. How will Mercurio react if the series bombs? "Just move on. I've got the energy to do so. What's really disappointing is something not getting made. I'm pleased with *Invasion Earth* but if it's not to the audience's taste, then I'll learn something from the experience. But it won't make me dislike the series."

"I look back at episodes of *Cardiac Arrest* and I think, 'God, it was so crap'. But that was a successful TV series. The thing is to be professional. I'd never go back to being a doctor. I'm so used to the life I've got now. And I'm also so far out of practice that it would take six months to get back to the position I was in when I left. That would be six months better spent writing a screenplay."

"Neither have I got anything to say about the health service. I said it all in the first one and a half series of *Cardiac Arrest*. I was beginning to lose my touch by the last series. I didn't have the anger I had when I was working as a doctor. I am not that concerned about NHS issues. It would not be appropriate for me to fight that battle. There are writers out there who are much closer to the subject matter than I am now."



Jed Mercurio: "I've got to be enthusiastic about an idea as a viewer before I would think of making it"

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media times

The last of the great reporters?

Magnus Linklater recalls working with a legendary investigative journalist

Jim Phelan was an investigative reporter of the old school. He took on the tough stories, explored the dark alleys of the Kennedy assassination, looked into the mysteries of the Howard Hughes empire, challenged gangsters on their patches, and once wound up in a ditch with a gun pointed at his head. Three times nominated for a Pulitzer Prize, he died last year, the day after he had been handed a finished copy of his latest book, *The Money*, co-written with Lewis Chester, the former *Sunday Times* journalist, and published in Britain this month.

Phelan epitomised a hard-bitten school of investigative journalism that has almost entirely disappeared. Once, however, it sustained the huge circulations of such newspapers as the *Daily Express* under Arthur Christiansen, and *The People* when it was edited by the legendary Sam Campbell. These days it has been largely replaced by chequebook journalism, the relentless pursuit of royalty, or the cultivated art of the leak: it is out of fashion, derided even.

Charles Moore, the Editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, commenting last year on *The Guardian* expose of Jonathan Aitken, observed loftily: "I admire much of the work. *The Guardian* has done over corruption than exposing corruption... It is to tell people the news, and to interpret it in a way they find interesting, honest and helpful."

Phelan would have snorted at that. For him, exposing corruption or dishonesty was the heart of journalism. In the foreword to a book of his collected work, Tom Wicker, the

New York Times writer, summed him up: "Phelan appears to suffer incurably... from the notion that if Americans knew enough about it, they wouldn't tolerate so much deception, greed, fraud, graft, theft, waste, ineptitude, rape of the public interest, and rank injustice, private and official."

Like others of his breed, Phelan was an obsessive, driven by what he called "the intolerable psychic itch of curiosity". He described himself as one of the "true compulsives who keep poking at a stubborn story long after their more sensible colleagues have had their quick go at it and moved on". His favourite definition of a good reporter was "one who doesn't know how to quit".

I first met him when I was one of a trio of *Sunday Times* reporters investigating the hoax autobiography of Howard Hughes in the early 1970s and we briefly joined forces with Phelan. He arrived in New York wearing a bush-jacket and a coonskin cap. He was indefatigable in nailing down the facts, refusing to take "no" for an answer, "door-stepping" his quarry all day if necessary, piecing the evidence together like a latter-day Philip Marlowe.

He had a taste for the dramatic. Asked why he wore a safari jacket in New York, he replied: "Cos I ain't out of the jungle yet." He refused to abandon the coonskin cap until the job was complete. In this he was a bit like the legendary Duncan Webb, who investigated the Messina gang for *The People* in the 1950s, and used to work behind a bulletproof screen that he had built around his desk.

Like Webb, Phelan preferred to



Jim Phelan wearing his trademark coonskin. He described himself a "true compulsive" in pursuit of the truth

work alone. But he was given the time and resources by such magazines as *Saturday Evening Post*, *Life* and *Look* to pursue the "unsolved journalistic jigsaw puzzles" that he called his trade. He admitted that it could be expensive work at times, once following a story for five months, during which his editor paid out more than \$20,000 (£12,000) in expenses apart from his salary.

All that money produced just a single newspaper story of 2,000 words which, by Phelan's calculations, worked out at \$17 a word. "I learnt early on that most publishers and editors prefer stories that can be assembled in a day or two with a few telephone calls," he said.

Perhaps it is the cost of investiga-

tive journalism that discourages newspapers today, or it may be the fear of even more expensive libel actions.

But there must be more to it than that. The cost is as nothing compared to the bills run up chasing snatched pictures in the Mediterranean, or the chequebook purchase of kiss-and-tell stories for the tabloids. As for libel, Phelan himself said that the truth was a pretty good insulation against expensive actions. "The chilling effect of libel suits would be substantially reduced if publishers and editors budgeted more for producing articles and less for lawyers to defend them," he wrote.

I do not see many Phelans on the scene today. That cannot, surely, be

because there are no young journalists with his bloodhound instincts. And it is certainly not because the world is suddenly free of gangsters, phonyes, crooks and frauds. Instead, I suspect, it is because today's newspapers are keener on the quick-fix story and the instant headline than they are on the time-consuming and ultimately uncertain business of digging out the truth.

That is a pity, because the end-product is what journalism is all about. As Phelan himself once wrote: "Inquiry is the core of all reporting. If an investigative reporter is one who investigates what he writes about, what do all the others do?"

● The Money, by James Phelan and Lewis Chester, is published by Orion (£20.00)

Let's try telling them the truth

Meg Carter reports on the growing fashion for down-to-earth television advertising

The garage door opens and we see a woman enter and deposit boxes of old toys and clothes. Fast forward to another day and the woman once more adds to the pile of clutter. The scene is repeated a third time before a closing shot reveals her car outside. "Nissan Micra built from Durasteel," the commercial observes, "perfect for those without a garage."

The Micra ad, part of a £5 million-plus campaign which broke this week, is revolutionary in car advertising. It represents a fresh take on late-Nineties' consumer tastes and lifestyles.

A growing number of ad agencies now acknowledge they can no longer afford to just play on our guilt or aspirations to sell products. Peter Bracegirdle, account director for Nissan at the advertising agency TBWA Simons Palmer, says: "Nineties consumers want messages without puffery. With the millennium and Blair's focus on 'new honesty', people are no longer interested in gloss. They're less likely to be seduced by image than they were during the Thatcher years." His view is supported by a study conducted by ad agency RPM3. Consumer optimism collapsed into cynicism when the "Thatcher bubble burst," says Rupert Sutton, the agency's creative director. "People may be a little more optimistic under Blair but there's still a widespread feeling of having been duped — by government, by pensions providers and by advertising."

Recognition of this came in the early Nineties with Tesco's introduction of the copyline "Every little helps" and Safeway's "Lightening the load" slogan. More recently,

Procter & Gamble has replaced supermodels with real women in a number of its ads. RPM3 created the current "Shopping in the real world" campaign for Somerfield and recent down-to-earth commercials for the Mitsubishi Carisma. "The general mood of the public now is practical," Sutton believes. "It's about an attitude of mind rather than a specific advertising style."

Others, however, have been slow to modify their style. Until now, "We want people to look at these ads and say 'That's me, that's my life,'" says Guy Moore, the creative



Light relief: a Micra car ad

director who co-wrote the Nissan campaign with his creative partner, Tony Malcolm. "It's about selling an understanding of what the product is and why it's relevant, rather than selling an unachievable lifestyle."

Nissan Micra posters — also part of the new campaign — show restless kids in the back seat and a small child peering at the roadside. Those appearing in the ads look ordinary. Art direction was minimal and the photographic style casual. "New realism" in advertising, however, is not without its pitfalls. Presenting the product at its least glamorous risks the subject being perceived as downmarket. Moore admits. But he adds: "Those who might have that response to these ads wouldn't be in the market for a Micra, anyway."

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The Observer: one last throw of the dice?

Jonathan Fenby asks whether our oldest Sunday paper can survive another relaunch

Over the past five years, *The Observer* has had as many fresh starts as the rest of the Sunday broadsheets put together. When I became Editor after the Guardian group bought the paper from Lonrho in June 1993, I naturally proclaimed a new dawn, particularly when we were named Newspaper of the Year for 1993 by *What The Papers Say*. Even Paul Johnson, arch-critic of *The Guardian*, had a good word for us.

Within two years, a new Editor was launching what he described as the first stage in a fresh redevelopment of the paper. Ten months on, under its third Editor in as many years, *The Observer* was overhauled again, with Hugo Young, who presided over all this as chairman of the Scott Trust, talking of the restoration of old glories.

Now another great leap forward is in the making as plans are drawn up for another relaunch in September to try to square an ever-diminishing circle. For, amid all the comings and goings — and all the redundancies — there has been one constant at Britain's oldest Sunday paper: sales have gone down and down, and, after a significant improvement in 1993-94, losses have risen to a level not

needed to buy an *Observer* which was taking on more and more of *The Guardian's* journalists and characteristics?

When we presented dummies of the enlarged Saturday *Guardian* to advertising agencies, one slogan we had used was "The weekend begins on Saturday — so why not get your weekend paper then?" The message seems to have hit home with readers: *Guardian* sales on Saturday forged far ahead of those of *The Observer* — sources at the daily talk of gaps of 100,000 or more.

Not surprising, then, that it is time for yet another search for light at the end of *The Observer* tunnel, complete with the requisite executive reshuffle. Not surprising, either, the talk of this being a final throw of the dice. It even seems that some of *The Guardian's* top brass have fallen back on blaming *The Observer's* plight on factions who, apparently, remain loyal to departed Editors.

The trouble has always been that, though the link-up seemed the most natural of unions to many outside the two papers, the journalists at both *The Guardian* and *The Observer* were never soulmates.

Without *The Guardian's* intervention, *The Observer* would have disappeared into the embrace of

The Independent on Sunday. Naturally enough, *The Guardian* felt that it was owed a debt of gratitude, and some of its journalists relished rubbing *The Observer's* nose in the mud, while blaming their limited pay rises on the Sunday's losses. Fatally, too many *Observer* journalists were still caught in feather-bedding cynicism, and had no compunction about flaunting an imagined superiority — one likened their situation to Fortnum's being bought by Tesco.

And, in the stratosphere of the Scott Trust, nobody seemed to grasp that you cannot rebuild a newspaper losing more than £10 million a year by slashing budgets to meet a pre-ordained target which bears no link with commercial reality.

In such an environment, it is hardly surprising that *The Observer* has lacked the confidence, time and money which any national newspaper and its editor



Fenby: unhappy union with *The Guardian*

too far from those inherited from Lonrho.

Though *Observer* journalists popped open champagne in the June sunshine to celebrate their salvation in 1993, plenty of bad news awaited the new owners, who did not seem to know quite how weak a paper they had paid £27 million for. The long decline under Lonrho meant that sales were dropping through the psychologically important half-million mark. I was told to expect 450,000 by Christmas.

In fact, the paper never hit that level while I was Editor, and we even managed seven months averaging more than half-a-million. Then, despite two new Editors and two relaunches, circulation not only fell through 450,000 but, if you take out cut-price bulk sales, slalomed down to just below 400,000 in February.

The Guardian's successful resistance to the price wars may have shown that it knows what it is doing, but this looked like a marriage in which the partners needed to keep their distance. Having been involved in *The Guardian's* Saturday expansion, I had been wary of the daily "colouring" the Sunday paper, believing that *The Observer* had to be independently edited, without an Editor-in-Chief from *The Guardian*.

I insisted that Mr Young write a phrase to that effect into the announcement of my appointment. But, after 18 months, the trust decided that it wanted to bring the two papers closer so that some of the daily's magic could rub off on the Sunday, or at least so that some money could be saved. The irony is that, for all *The Guardian's* success, the closer its links have grown with *The Observer*, the worse *The Observer's* position has become.

And there was another factor in the relationship. Why should a *Guardian* reader, replete with that paper's weekend goodies, feel any

needs to succeed. It is said that it takes three years to turn round a national newspaper. Instead of recognising that it had acquired a badly holed tanker, *The Guardian* acted as if *The Observer* was a skiff to be jerked this way and that, without the kind of investment its main rivals take for granted. Of course, owners get rid of editors they consider to have fallen down on the job — but each bloodletting has been followed by higher losses. The resulting downward spiral has sucked in some of the paper's real strengths, and produced contradictions which alienate some readers, without attracting others.

For those who put commercial viability above the preservation of newspaper titles, there was a way out. A merger of *The Observer* and *The Independent on Sunday* would have given the combined paper a fighting chance. *The Guardian* said no for fear that it would give *The Independent* cash with which to compete on the daily front. Logical reasoning for *The Guardian*; but a sign of whose interests prevailed when the chips were down.

As the sales of *The Observer* and *The Independent on Sunday* have fallen, the benefits of merger have shrunk, too. Tony O'Reilly may not want to inaugurate his ownership of *The Independent* by going into a merger as the junior partner. The merger at *The Observer* will have been given fresh assurances that it has the full confidence of the Scott Trust in the latest bid to reach the glory goal. The paper did an excellent job on the Northern Ireland story last weekend, and, like Superman, may break free from its chains at last. But, over the past five years, it has built up quite a legacy to escape from.

Jonathan Fenby was Editor of *The Observer* from 1993 to 1995 after being deputy editor of *The Guardian* for four years. He is now Editor of the South China Morning Post.



The moment of victory: *Guardian* Editor Alan Rusbridger, left, and former Editor Peter Preston outside the High Court after the collapse of the Aitken libel case

Aitken, lies and hypocrisy

Alan Rusbridger, the Editor of *The Guardian*, replies to accusations that his paper hounded a disgraced former minister

It is some nine months since the *Guardian's* defence team handed Jonathan Aitken the evidence that brought his world crashing down about him. He was on the verge of putting his wife and daughter into the witness box on his behalf: his lawyers billed it as "Ladies' Day".

An hotel bill and two British Airways dockets unearthed by our reporters and lawyers revealed that the story that Aitken and his ladies were conspiring to tell the court was, from start to finish, untrue. End of trial.

In the succeeding weeks I met several friends of Aitken, few of whom expressed surprise at the outcome of the trial. They all described him as clever, charming, amusing and good company. But most had a story involving duplicity of some sort, or else a reckless urge to gamble. None was really shocked.

I was, despite all I knew about Aitken by then, I was still shocked that someone should be prepared to lie on oath in a court of law, never mind involve his family. So, on the day the trial collapsed, I wrote a short letter to Sir Paul Condon, Metropolitan Commissioner of Police, asking him to look at whether an offence had been committed. While there is still a law of perjury, it seems reasonable that potential breaches of it should be investigated.

No one at the time seemed to

think that this was a remarkable step. Stephen Glover — no particular lover of *The Guardian* — wrote in *The Spectator*: "If the judge had believed the lie (and who could blame him if he had?), Mr Aitken might cheerfully have taken *The Guardian* for a great deal of money on this and other charges. He was, in effect, trying to defraud the newspaper as well as mislead the court. Why on earth shouldn't Mr Rusbridger ask the DPP to look into the matter?"

But in the intervening months the Friends of Aitken have been busy spinning away with tales of the former minister's remorse and suggesting that the police investigation is vindictive. One old schoolfriend of Aitken's, Lord Pearson of Rannoch, recently spread the "true" story of the "silly little lie" about the Ritz bill, which was apparently that Aitken "exhausted at the end of a long day and on the brink of his Cabinet appointment" — was telephoned by *The Guardian* and unthinkingly lied. That spur of the moment misjudgment was what sank him.

It is a nice story, but like so many other things connected with Aitken, completely untrue. In October 1993 he was telephoned by a *Guardian* reporter, but declined to speak with

him, suggesting instead that he put his questions in writing. We did. He replied — in writing. The question of who paid the Ritz bill was raised for the first time by *The Guardian* in January 1994 — again, in writing. Mr Aitken responded with a misleading version — in writing. He was not promoted to the Cabinet until nine months later.

Did Lord Pearson imagine this? Or was it suggested to him by Mr Aitken? If the latter, does it suggest a) a man stricken by remorse who has come to terms with his Maker (and his wrongdoing); or b) a man still thinking coldly on his feet and intent on misusing the press to spin his way out of trouble?

Whatever, Lord Pearson is — along with Paul Johnson and Taki — a founder member of the Aitken-has-suffered-enough school. That is understandable from friends. It is more mystifying coming from proper grown-up journalists such as Magnus Linklater (though he is also a friend of Aitken's). In these pages last week he accused *The Guardian* of vindictiveness in "hounding" Aitken.

The argument that journalists should smile indulgently at people

who deliberately lie during the course of suing newspapers is an odd one to come from a fellow journalist. As a former Editor and investigative reporter, Magnus Linklater knows better than most that people who sue newspapers quite often lie. Libel cases thus become a kind of game, where the plaintiff makes a calculation about the respective depth of pockets, coolness of nerve — and whether the newspaper is going to be able to prove the story in the face of the plaintiff's lie. It's a gamble, but it's usually worth taking because the English libel laws tend to be stacked against the defendant.

Aitken is far from being alone in fighting an action he knew was falsely based. Perhaps the most notorious example is that of Aneurin Bevan, Morgan Phillips and Richard Crossman, who each took a considerable sum off *The Spectator* in 1957 for suggesting they had been drunk at a conference in Venice. Crossman later admitted that they had been drunk and wrote in his diaries: "It seems to me the more I reflect on it to have been the kind of gamble which no one should responsibly have taken, even though we did win in the end."

It is one of the ironies of the Aitken business that *The Spectator* — which was so wronged on that occasion — should be the magazine which now most noisily cheers on Aitken and seeks to denigrate *The Guardian*.

I have no doubt that Aitken knew exactly the gamble he was taking. He rejected the opportunity offered by *The Guardian* to walk away from the action just before it began. Like Crossman, Bevan and Phillips, he gambled: it was a deliberate calculation based on the belief that *The Guardian* and Granada Television could not find a way of uncovering the lie at the heart of his case.

If lying plaintiffs know that, in future, they risk being prosecuted and even going to jail, then actions for libel will stop being played as a game and will become a wholly different kind of exercise. Result: many editors will feel freer to publish searching, honest journalism. What on earth is wrong with that?

Since writing the initial letter I have made no contact with the police or the Crown Prosecution Service (some "hounding"). It's up to them whether Aitken is prosecuted. If he's not, fine. But in that case, let's not be hypocritical about it; let's just abolish the law of perjury altogether. And let's encourage libel as a lottery in which the more convincingly you lie the better your chance of winning.

Foster's raises beer ads from the dregs

THE UK ad industry worries that it has lost the knack of making great beer ads. Old lags lament the classic Castlemaine XXXX, John Smith's, Heineken, Holsten and Carling campaigns, sighing "they don't make them like they used to". But is this yet another example of the industry's obsessive nostalgia?

Not if you look at the bemusing new Carling ads, nor the appalling recent Holsten poster campaign, or last year's dreadful Castlemaine work. However, this week, Scottish Courage announced a £10 million advertising investment behind another 1980s brand icon, Foster's, which may improve the malaise.

"Like angels crying on your tongue" was a classic advertising tagline. Foster's "the amber nectar" used Crocodile Dundee himself (Paul Hogan) to portray the classic Australian innocent abroad. With his corked hat and home truths, Hogan mocked the urban yuppie world in which he was cast adrift. Foster's in hand.

But then Hogan became too big a star and the joke began to wear thin. Unfortunately, Courage (now Scottish Courage) has spent most of the 1990s trying to come up with an adequate replacement.

How many people recall the Hollywood superstar Burt Lancaster being driven around the Scottish Highlands in the back of a stretched limo? In an excruciating, hammy commercial he threw out his whisky bottle in favour of a can of Foster's. Lancaster nearly threw away his reputation in the process. Then came the "search for the amber nectar" — an advertising series spoofing *Mad Max*. As with

most such series — with the exception of Gold Blend — the idea floundered on the lack of a big enough budget. It meant viewers hadn't seen the previous ad before the campaign moved on, leaving them confused.

If that was bad, in 1996 along came "tickle it, you wrigglers". This campaign relied on the weird humour of its two stars, the Australian comedians, Roy and HG. Apparently they were a huge hit Down Under. But they flopped here.

The new ads from M & C Saatchi are a big improvement, if coming from a low base. Three ads set in France, Italy and Mexico, pastiche foreign language films, complete with sub-titles. In each, a Foster's drinker steals the show, delivering the customary corny Australian quips — albeit in different languages.

It's a clever strategy. It says you don't have to be Australian to drink Foster's, but you can buy into the Australian sense of humour. The commercials are classics of the British old school. They are beautifully shot, and the punning is heavy. However, the commercials are a little bit laboured. But



they just might work if Scottish Courage is prepared to stick with the strategy and spend similar amounts next year and the year after.



Foster's ads haven't been the same since Hogan

The lager market is a classic example of a sector where consumers drink the advertising. So, what do they drink if the advertising keeps changing? As with Rover last week, the key to resurrecting the Foster's brand is the long-term consistency of the brand's marketing activity.

THE interminable Equity dispute with the commercials industry spluttered back into life this week when the actors' union dared to take on Cilla Black.

Equity wrote to Cilla after she agreed to provide a voiceover on the new Safeway commercials, replacing — among others — Martin Chunes, who had declined to be the male child's voice in accordance with Equity policy.

Now Cilla has become the best-known of eight members who Equity has suggested might like to resign their membership. As yet, it has received no response.

Graham Hinton, the president of the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising, describes the pressure Cilla and the others have been put under as "outrageous". That's not surprising

— Hinton is also the chief executive of Safeway's ad agency, Bates Dorland.

NEWS that high street retailers including Marks & Spencer, Bhs, Selfridges and M&S will run a joint campaign next month encouraging British men to smarten up has excited much comment.

The "Dress for Success" campaign is aimed at getting men aged 28 to 40 to buy more expensive clothes more often. The retailers are making polite noises about encouraging men to shop more like fashion-conscious women — buying matching outfits, for example.

This may seem weird to readers of papers such as *The Times*, who have been reading articles about the "peacock male" for years. It highlights the chasm between the people who write about designer fashion, and the ordinary consumer dragged around high street and shopping malls on Saturday afternoon.

You won't hear the retailers say it, because it's politically incorrect, but up to a certain age (I'd quibble with 28) men buy clothes as a pulling tool. The aim is to target the age group above this. Their spending power is huge, but interest in clothes dwindles as they stop prowling.

Nevertheless, it is a great achievement that rivals such as these have got together to agree on anything. Wish them well. If they can succeed where millions of hapless wives and girlfriends have failed, it will be a major cultural revolution.

Stefano Hatfield is the editor of Campaign.

EDUCATION

Anne Lee looks at the skills a good teacher can use in another career

Want to move on?

After two weeks of unremitting gloom from the teacher unions' conferences, those considering entering the profession could be forgiven for thinking twice. They have heard that the bureaucracy is enough to provoke industrial action, the pay is low and stress is rife.

There are plenty of other options — a recent survey suggested that most young people would prefer to go into business. Yet a study of 1,000 sixth-formers showed that more than a quarter still rated teaching as their most attractive option. What is it that overcomes such negative stereotyping and should continue to draw able youngsters into the profession?

Research from Hong Kong suggests that it is not a sense of altruism that inspires prospective teachers. The three most compelling motives for students were that they were interested in the work, they liked the opportunity for further study and saw some job stability.

While it might appear that at the moment money is being made available for everything but teachers' pay increases, there are other rewards. A short-term incentive for students is the absence of fees for postgraduate training courses, while in the long term there is the example of those in senior positions who began life at the front of the classroom.

We might expect our leading educational establishment figures to have sprung from this background. Anthea Millett, the chief executive of the Teacher Training Agency, was once a geography teacher, while Chris Woodhead, the Chief Inspector of Schools, taught English. Others, such as Professor Tim Brighouse, now the Chief Education Officer of Birmingham, have used it as a springboard to academia.

But there are prominent former teachers in the most unlikely walks of life: the pop star Sting, the novelist Joanna Trollope and Howard Wilkinson, the Football Association's director of coaching, to name but a few. More MFs have worked in education than in any other single profession, but for some prospective teachers, the most interesting figures are likely to be those who have moved successfully into business.

Kevin McNeany, for example, is chairman of the large profitable organisation Nord Anglia, which employs 1,200 people and makes a business of education: running and inspecting schools in the UK and overseas, as well as supplying and training teachers and heads. He began working life teaching English in a secondary modern and moved on to a comprehensive.

Michael Longshaw, the troubleshooting director of Brocket Park conference



Joanna Trollope and Sting left teaching for successful careers, one as a novelist, the other as a musician and actor



Kevin McNeany, left, made education his business, while Michael Longshaw used his experience to turn hotels around



centre, is a former PE teacher who now has 15 years' experience in turning hotels around from receivership. Dr David Moore was a physics teacher in Worcester and a deputy head before becoming chief executive of the Association for Science Education, a leading professional organisation with more than 20,000 members and a budget of £2 million.

There is some evidence to suggest that once teachers fall into a routine, they fail to work to their full capacity and become less effective. For some, teaching is a life-long source of satisfaction, for others it is only part of the journey.

Good teachers will have transferable skills that can lead to another career. They will be able to research and present data in a comprehensible way, manage and motivate large groups and plan important exercises — just think of the potential hazards on a school skiing trip.

Heads of department will have developed man-management skills; they should have been involved in recruiting, inducting, motivating and disciplining their staff. They will

have had some control over budgets, and will have had to tackle sickness, lateness and absenteeism, as well as parental complaints.

The role of the teacher is changing. It may be that there will be an increasing division between becoming an IT support service and a guide or tutor, but mastering these changes will only increase a teacher's employability.

Arthur Anderson will need to recruit its futuristic classroom designers from somewhere.

Deputy heads should have learnt the skill of advising and guiding their headmaster on internal school matters, organising large school functions, allocating staff time and resources and, if they manage the timetable of a large school, they will have mastered complex information technology and project management skills.

Head teachers will have achieved one of the most difficult skill mixes of all. They will have learnt how to tap the skills of their non-executive directors and keep them informed but not too involved, harness the (often competing) energies of a senior manage-

ment team, act as the public relations and marketing department, give interviews at the drop of a hat, deal with very difficult parents, children and situations while remaining utterly charming to the catering staff, and managing a budget of several million pounds. They learn the art of delegating everything while appearing not to, because everyone has to "have a word with the head".

There are many paths for experienced teachers. Recently, head teachers of large schools have been appointed in their thirties, and there will be more experienced survivors looking for a further career move. Some will benefit from career planning: the wisest ones are realising that lifelong learning means training.

In-service training is now much more attractive to teachers if it counts towards a masters programme. Charlotte Rendle-Short has been studying an MBA and was promoted from the headship of Sunderland High to deputy chief executive of the Church Schools' Company. "Studying with people from business and industry enabled me to benchmark my career and compare it with those of other senior executives," she says.

For the past decade commercial companies have been

trying to recover their agility by becoming "learning organisations". Ever since the philosophical concept of "deschooling" was identified, teachers have been trying to maintain an effective balance between control and independent learning. What profession is better equipped to help us to become a learning society? Experience in teaching can be fulfilling in itself; it can also be a stepping stone to an exciting future.

● The author is a school governor, a former head teacher and businesswoman.

For some, teaching is only part of life's journey

An inspector calls

It is not just inside the classroom that tension over Ofsted builds up



I FOR ONE WON'T BE SORRY WHEN THIS OFSTED PERSON GOES

For nine months I have been an Ofsted husband, one element of a ménage à trois and I was definitely in third place.

My wife, a teacher at an Outer London junior school, first mentioned Ofsted several years ago. She had a mild interest, said things like "Ummmm" and "Really" and thought little more of it. This was cerebral education stuff, way out of my league and, anyway, what had she to worry about, a thorough professional working in a highly regarded school? In the vernacular of the playground: no problem.

But slowly, insidiously, Ofsted crept into our home. The name would crop up regularly enough to be noticed. She would mention Ofsted as frequently as she would a friend, or an enemy.

The phrase "inspection within four years" also became noticeable in conversation, together with the stage-whispered comment, as books were stacked with a thankful sigh on the breakfast room table at the end of an evening's marking. "And just wait until we know we're going to be Ofsted!"

For Ofsted read grilled, roasted, tortured, quartered, sacrificed, beamed down from the Enterprise with no beam-up facility.

In my naivety, I thought this initial stage would be the worst part, that the reality, if worst came to worst, would be far less intimidating.

Ofsted had moved in with us. At first, it was not too bad; it

just dominated conversation for a week. But, as the countdown began in earnest, its presence grew ever larger and my already hardworking wife worked all the harder in those final weeks, now known as "Before Ofsted".

There were changes at home. Mealtimes tended to become flexible because the breakfast-room table, often used for evening meals, was now in almost constant use as a desk. We would eat frozen meals absurdly formally on the polished dining-room table or, totally against our normal principles, on trays watching the television. That was how far Ofsted had dragged us down.

Evening after evening, Sunday after Sunday, saw maximum effort achieved as my wife concentrated on work. Ofsted was all-pervading, even the cat seemed aware of it, her paws more purposefully clamped to her ears.

Over matters marital, I will draw a discreet veil, save to say that I did wonder at one time whether I could cite Ofsted in the divorce court as "the guilty party". I would just need to ensure that the judge was married to a teacher; the result would be a foregone conclusion and I felt certain I would be given custody of the breakfast-room table.

At last came the testing time of Ofsted week. Would this be four days of unbearable tension, terror, tears and tantrums? And that was just for me.

In fact, it all went very well. There was some criticism by the inspectors, of course, but plenty of praise, appreciation and understanding. By 5pm on the last day, the tail-lights of their cars had faded into the gathering dusk.

In our home that night, the breakfast table was clear of exercise books and, in celebration, once more used for supper. The cat stretched and left her paws on the ground, and we returned to a *ménage à deux*. It was midnight, it was all over. No question of citing Ofsted now, I thought.

Then, as my wife turned out the light, she said thoughtfully: "You know, they just could be back in two years..."

STUART BIRCH

From playground to sportsfield

Phil Revell reports on a novel scheme that seeks to give primary schoolchildren a real sporting chance

Primary schoolchildren across England will be involved in a rash of mini sports festivals this summer. Co Durham will focus on orienteering and fitness, Nottingham will have a sports day for junior schools and West Somerset will offer ten-year-olds a chance to try four different sports.

So what's new? Well, the key difference is that the sports administrators will have to obtain permission to miss their lessons to do so — none is over 18.

The project is the work of the Youth Sports Trust, a charity that aims to promote sport in schools. Thousands of schools are involved in the trust's TOPS programmes — nearly 70,000 teachers have been given free training and more than 500,000 individual pieces of sports kit have been donated to schools.

This summer's festival will be the culmination of the trust's Top Link programme, which aims to train older pupils to run sports programmes for primary schoolchildren. Those who wonder whether teenagers will be capable or motivated enough to carry the programme through would be well advised to spend a few minutes in the company of Sean Ross, 17, who is organising a sports challenge in Brent, allowing 200 children to experience four different sports.

"Sport has declined a lot in Brent because of budget cuts," says Sean. "I'd like to help to change that."

Sean was attending a Top Link Easter camp at Loughborough University along with 215 other young people from 72 schools. The camp was the first initiative of Loughborough's Institute of Youth Sport. The institute, set up this year, aims to fill a research gap about children's sporting development and potential. A full research

department, including a chair of youth sport, is being created.

Traditionally, university departments have focused on sports science or administration. The new institute will straddle both areas, and the university may look outside the UK to fill the chair — possibly to America, where sport is more rooted in the educational system.

The trust and institute are working to encourage sporting development at grass-roots level. "This is not just talent identification," says Sue Campbell, the trust's chief executive. "What about links between sporting and academic ability? Why do so many young women drop out of sport? What structures are needed to support young sports people?"

The Loughborough facilities are being used to develop programmes for young athletes. These will not only focus on personal achievement, but will include clinics on leadership and coaching skills to ensure that knowledge and expertise flow down to clubs and schools.

Sessions on festival planning and sports management addressed the problems the teenagers will face in planning their events, and top coaches gave masterclasses on the best ways to introduce sport to the very young. A summer school is expected to

draw talented young athletes from all over the UK to Loughborough.

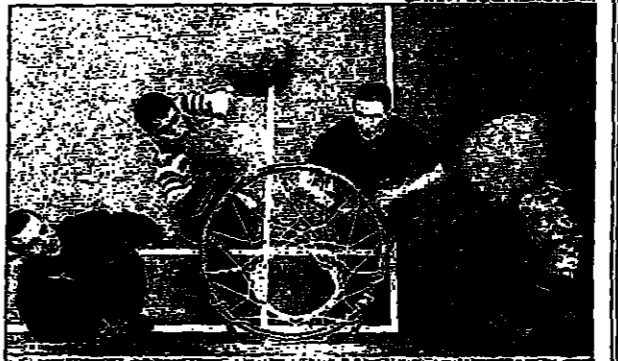
The trust and the institute have both been funded by John Bewkwith, a millionaire who made his fortune in the property boom of the Eighties. He has provided more than £1 million annually for the trust and £250,000 for the institute.

Bewkwith feels participation in sport creates young people who can use their energies for society, not against it. "Sport has a wider influence in social terms. It helps young people to realise their value to society."

"I hope this institute will help aspiring young athletes to reach their full potential — and win more medals for Britain."

In the lecture halls, Sue Campbell was introducing the budding administrators to sports bureaucracy. "Who's the Minister for Sport?" A forest of hands proclaimed Tony Banks's success in establishing a persona recognised by young people.

As they streamed out into the sunshine, bright-eyed and raring to go, ambitions were discussed. Many wanted to go on to compete, for their country if possible. One girl was down to earth. "I haven't got the natural talent to do that," she said. "But I want to make a difference."



Net result: the sports leadership camp at Loughborough

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CHANGING TIMES

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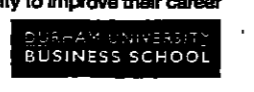


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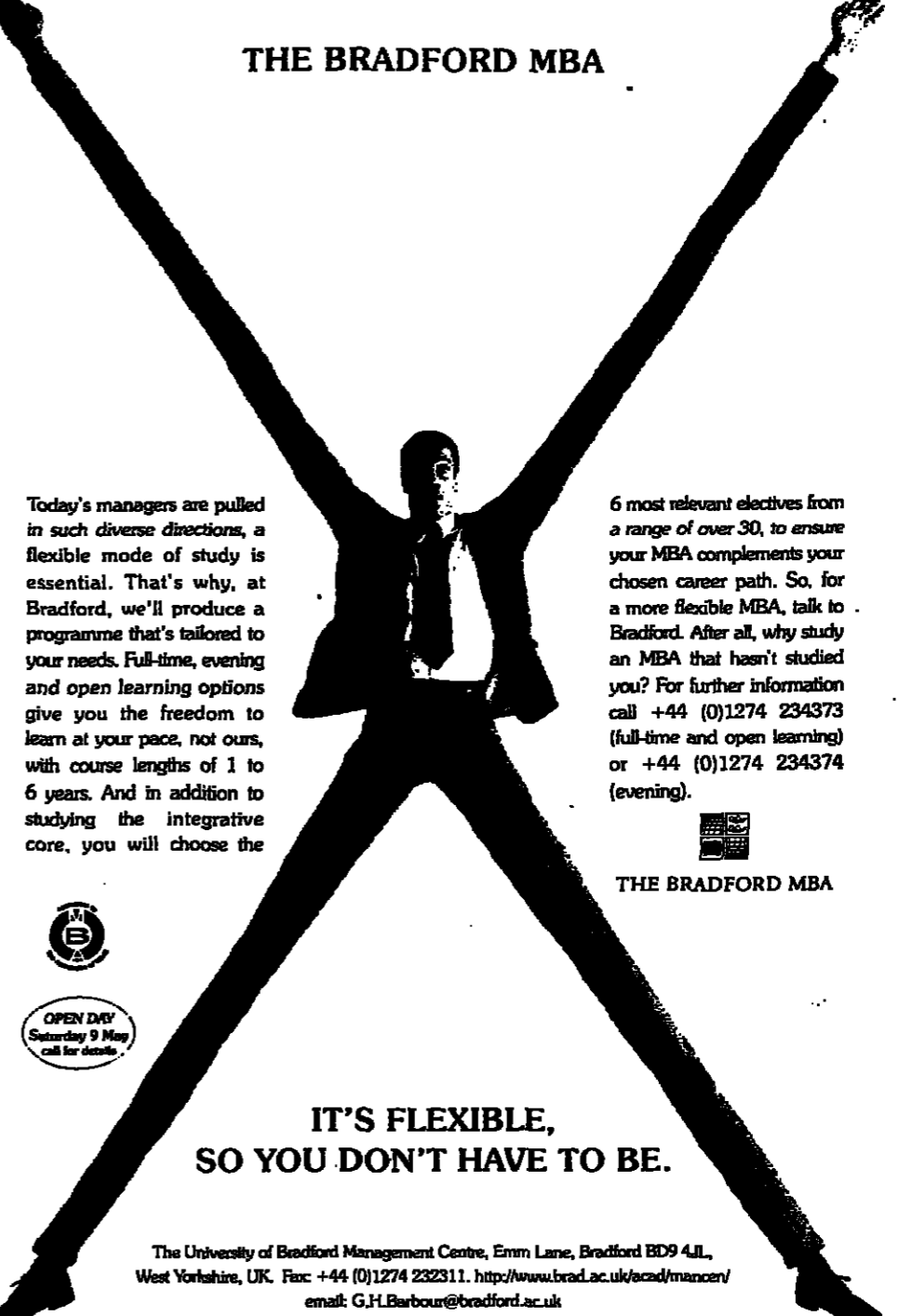
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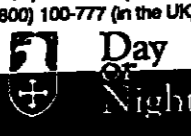
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CRICKET

Buchanan's record points to more Middlesex success

By MICHAEL HENDERSON

RAIN, sleet, snow, gusting winds and temperatures only slightly higher than Michael Atherton's batting average in the West Indies: the cricket season begins today in time-honoured fashion, with the weathermen predicting that the slate-coloured skies are not ready to shift. If there is a significant amount of play in any of the eight championship matches that start this morning, people can consider themselves lucky. Brrrr!

Should the ghastly weather relent, the most alluring game in prospect is at Canterbury between Kent, the runners-up last year, and Middlesex, who can always be relied upon to play proper cricket. Now that John Buchanan has joined them as coach for this year, and possibly next season as well, depending on how the arrangement suits both parties, they are not likely to be any less competitive.

Buchanan, the latest county coach to be recruited from Australia, led Queensland to their first Sheffield Shield title in 1994-95, amid much manly blubbing, and emulated the feat last year. Two weeks into his new job he is enjoying well-regarded in the Middlesex dressing-room for Angus Fraser to say: "It feels like an international set-up at county level."

TODAY'S FIXTURES

British Assurance County Championship
11.0, first day of four, 104 overs minimum
DERBY: Derbyshire v Nottinghamshire
HOVE: Sussex v Lancashire
CANTEBURY: Kent v Middlesex
BRISTOL: Gloucestershire v Glamorgan
THE OVAL: Surrey v Northamptonshire
EDGBASTON: Warwickshire v Durham
WORCESTER: Worcestershire v Essex
HEADINGLEY: Yorkshire v Somerset

University matches
11.30, first day of three
FENNER'S: Cambridge University v Liverpool
THE PARKS: Oxford University v Hampshire

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Clarke has made a successful switch from running in tries to running a club. Photograph: Simon Wilkinson

Clarke's ambition undimmed

Christopher Irvine on an injury that closed one door but opened another

It was regularly said of Phil Clarke that he would end up running Wigan. At 24, he had achieved every domestic honour with the club several times, captained Great Britain and yearned for a fresh challenge in Australia. That experience ended in near-tragic consequences, with a broken neck, but set in train the events that led him back to Central Park as the game's youngest club chief executive at 26.

That he was not left permanently disabled by his accident in March 1996 was pure chance. It was only his twelfth appearance for Sydney City Roosters and Clarke was running with the ball when he drove head-first into a North Queensland opponent. The effect on his spinal column was like that of a high-speed pile-up, although all he felt initially was concussion.

professional and graduate in human biology, his dashing presence was as pronounced off as on the field. The world was Clarke's oyster when fate intervened, yet there is no bitterness and the desire to play again has gone.



Clarke in his playing days

Nickle free to tackle Eagles after not-guilty verdict

By CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

SONNY NICKLE was found not guilty of foul play by the Rugby Football League (RFL) disciplinary committee yesterday, which means that the Bradford Bulls forward is available for the champions' JJB Super League match at Sheffield Eagles tonight. Nickle was sent off after a brawl with Richie Blackmore, the Leeds Rhinos centre, who was sin binned.

Leeds are at home to Castleford Tigers, whose coach, Stuart Raper, accused the Rhinos of "taking their aggressive style of defence to the limit" in the victory at Bradford last Sunday. But Gary Hetherington, the Leeds chief executive, said: "We have some tough players and this team has a lot of steel running through it. To suggest that we're over the top is ridiculous and an attempt to influence the referee ahead of the game."

Leeds will lead the Super League if they can record a third successive league win and avenge the Silk Cut Challenge Cup defeat by Castleford in the opening match of the season at Headingley.

Since they reached Wembley, Sheffield have been beaten twice and Bradford are unlikely to be as accommodating as they were at Odsal five days ago.

Sleepy Peslier

NEWBURY

IL 17 1998
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RACING: CRAVEN STAKES WIN CONFIRMS 2,000 GUINEAS PROSPECTS

'Sleepy' Xaar responds to Peslier's wake-up call

By RICHARD EVANS, RACING CORRESPONDENT

THE old adage that good horses can handle any ground was underlined gloriously at Newmarket yesterday when Xaar came from last to first on unsuitably soft going to win the City Index Craven Stakes.

However, his self-belief faced a stern test three furlongs from home as Gulland galloped powerfully at the head of affairs - while Xaar was being nudged at by Olivier Peslier's last place.

Xaar had, though, raced in a similarly sleepy style before winning the Dewhurst Stakes in scintillating style by seven lengths last autumn. Sure enough, the message soon got

through to Xaar as he closed a quarter-mile out before locking horns with Gulland in the Dip. From there he battled on most gamely, without being hard ridden, to prevail.

"I thought Xaar was always controlling Gulland so I was not too worried," Fabre said. "Inside I thought he could not be beaten today. His style of racing indicates he is a lazy horse and needs more work."

Richard Evans
Nap: The Gay Fox (3.10 Newbury)

The Gay Fox reverts to his best trip after failing to stay six furlongs at Ripon last time. Previous soft ground and well drawn, he can challenge for the in-form Bryan McMahon yard.

Next best: Whitechapel (5.10 Newbury)

that is why I was very anxious to get a race into him. "I respect the second horse today and the distance back to the third was important. When I saw Gulland in the paddock he looked really well and I thought he was the horse we had to beat. The form of today's race is probably not top class and he will probably need to improve, but he had a good blow afterwards. He was a bit rusty and sleepy."

The ground will probably be better on Guineas day - and all those factors will make a difference. I would ideally like an extra week. Two weeks is a bit short between races but he is such an easy horse he will probably handle it."

Peslier added: "He is a bit lazy, more relaxed than last year and for a few moments I didn't think he would win, but in the last two furlongs he was just galloping."

Five years after Zafonic won the 2,000 Guineas in second time, his son will attempt to follow suit. Strangely enough, the two horses could hardly be more different in temperament and style. Zafonic was a large, powerful horse who was hard to settle, while Xaar is the complete opposite - and the better in Fabre's view.

Wragg has ruled out re-opposing Xaar in the Guineas

and will send Gulland to Chester for the Chester Vase or Dee Stakes, or York for the Dante Stakes. He looks a serious Derby contender.

On a day which offered its share of long-term clues, Border Arrow also entered classic calculations - after wearing down Alboastan inside the final furlong of the Feilden Stakes. The Seidler colt shows little at home but Ian Balding believes he could be useful over middle distances.

Queensland Star, carrying the colours of Alex Ferguson, the Manchester United manager, made a winning debut in the Stuntney Maiden Stakes at Newmarket yesterday. "If my team shows the same determination as that, we'll be there," Ferguson said of the College Chapel colt, who is trained by Jack Berry.

The unbeaten colt is jointly owned by Bob Miahelton and Wafric Said, whose Sagitta company is sponsoring the Guineas meeting. Despite the obvious temptation to run Border Arrow in the 2,000 Guineas, Balding would prefer to wait for the Dante Stakes and a challenge for the Derby.



Xaar, nearside, delivers a decisive late challenge to Gulland in the Craven Stakes at Newmarket yesterday

2.10 Red Deltium 3.40 Musical Twist
2.40 Close Up 4.10 Guildhall
3.10 Geimhrui 4.40 Karlyth
5.10 Cyrian

GOING: HEAVY TOTE JACKPOT MEETING
DRAW: 5F-6F, HIGH NUMBERS BEST
2.10 EBF BECHAMPTON NOVICE STAKES (2-Y-O: £3,525: 5f 34yd) (4 runners)

2.40 STROUD GREEN RATED HANDICAP (3-Y-O: £7,855: 1m 8f) (6 runners)

3.10 SOUTHEAST HANDICAP (SHOWCASE RACE) (£7,985: 5f 34yd) (13 runners)

3.40 DUBAI DUTY FREE FRED DARLING STAKES (SHOWCASE RACE) (Group III: 3-Y-O: £19,500: 7f 64yd md) (7 runners)

4.10 PETER SMITH MEMORIAL MAIDEN STAKES (3-Y-O: £3,623: 1m 3f 5yd) (7 runners)

4.40 BRIDGET MAIDEN FILLES STAKES (3-Y-O: £4,013: 7f 5yd) (10 runners)

5.10 LEVY BOARD SEVENTH RACE HANDICAP (£5,410: 2m) (7 runners)

103 (1) 9-0-32 GOOD TIMES 74 (2) 0-0-0 (3) 0-0-0 (4) 0-0-0 (5) 0-0-0

401 (8) 21222 CRAZE MENTAL 180 (9) 0-0-0 (10) 0-0-0 (11) 0-0-0 (12) 0-0-0

391 (3) 4-2 GARNATHAN BAY 20 (4) 0-0-0 (5) 0-0-0 (6) 0-0-0 (7) 0-0-0

301 (1) 0-0-0 SUPER PREMIUM 20 (2) 0-0-0 (3) 0-0-0 (4) 0-0-0 (5) 0-0-0

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Close Up suited by conditions
NEWBURY
BBC2

2.40: Conditions could hardly be less encouraging for this first attempt at the trip by Premium Pursuit and Tumbled Prospect, whereas there are no stammina doubts about Close Up, a game winner from the promising Giveaway in soft ground at Haydock last autumn - the pair pulled nine lengths clear. John Dunlop also runs Floraz; every bit as progressive at two but over seven furlongs on fast ground. Jazz Club went the wrong way after bearing Hayll on his debut, tailed off in the mud on his final start, so Shergarzar may play into the hands of

3.10: A high draw is an advantage when the ground is testing, so Repertory has been favoured in his attempt to follow up last year's success. He goes best fresh and runs off a 1lb lower mark. Bold Effort needs a strong pace at this trip, and a relative shortage of front-runners here may play into the hands of

4.10: Craze Mental's form is best of these, but she may not last this trip in the conditions. There are similar doubts about Daunting Lady, but both Chi Min and Fleeting have offered encouragement that they will get home. Fleeting won a listed race over course and distance on easy going, but Only In Dreams is expected to improve considerably on a modest maiden success at Leicester last autumn. She relished the seventh furlong in soft ground that day, and is reported to have continued her progress.



Lord High Admiral, who needs to dominate and has returned in good heart. Superior Premium, who also likes to be prominent, would be preferred but for his moderate draw. Jayannee needs faster ground, but the Gay Fox is capable of exploiting the rail.

3.40: Craze Mental's form is best of these, but she may not last this trip in the conditions. There are similar doubts about Daunting Lady, but both Chi Min and Fleeting have offered encouragement that they will get home. Fleeting won a listed race over course and distance on easy going, but Only In Dreams is expected to improve considerably on a modest maiden success at Leicester last autumn. She relished the seventh furlong in soft ground that day, and is reported to have continued her progress.

Chris McGrath

THUNDERER
2.20 JACK FLUSH, 2.50 GREY KINGDOM, 3.20 SPEAKER'S CHAIR, 3.50 WESTWOOD VIEW, 4.20 JENNIE, 4.50 DL

GOING: GOOD
DRAW: 5F-6F, HIGH NUMBERS BEST

2.20 STUDDFORD LEISURE CARPENTERS ARMS FELIXKID HANDICAP (3,113: 1m) (18 runners)

2.50 NASS HEAD PICKHILL HANDICAP (£3,358: 7f) (8 runners)

3.20 CRAB AND LOBSTER AISENBY MAIDEN STAKES (3-Y-O: £3,938: 1m 4f) (8 runners)

THUNDERER
2.00 JUSTIN MAC (nap), 2.30 LAKE KARBIA, 3.00 STRONG TIE, 3.30 COLONEL IN THE CLOUDS, 4.00 KINGS MEASURE, 4.30 JIGTIME, 5.00 REACH THE CLOUDS

GOING: GOOD
DRAW: 5F-6F, HIGH NUMBERS BEST

2.00 KENT ELECTRICAL NOVICES HURDLE (£4,380: 2m) (5 runners)

2.30 GRANDHOLE CHILDREN 1ST NOVICES CHASE (£4,500: 2m) (5 runners)

3.00 ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE (£4,510: 2m) (8 runners)

COURSE SPECIALISTS

3.50 STUDDFORD LEISURE FEATHERS HOTEL HELMSLEY NOVICE FILLES STAKES (2-Y-O: £3,750: 5f) (11 runners)

4.20 HAMBLETON LIMITED STAKES (£3,600: 5f) (7 runners)

4.50 STUDDFORD WHITE SWAN AMPLEFORTH MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES (£4,500: 6f) (17 runners)

2.50 NASS HEAD PICKHILL HANDICAP (£3,358: 7f) (8 runners)

COURSE SPECIALISTS

3.30 HILLHOUSE QUARRY HANDICAP CHASE (£2,450: 2m 4f) (8 runners)

4.00 MACKAY BREWERY EVELYN MATTHEWS HANDICAP HURDLE (£5,150: 3m 6f) (6 runners)

4.30 ROYAL SCOTS DRAGON GUARDS CUP HUNTERS CHASE (Amateur: £3,870: 3m 3f 110yd) (8 runners)

5.00 FRIENDLY HOTELS NOVICES HANDICAP HURDLE (£4,209: 2m 4f) (8 runners)

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EQUESTRIANISM

Whitaker in charge from first to last

FROM JENNY MACARTHUR IN HELSINKI

AFTER one of the most spectacular of his many feats of horsemanship, John Whitaker, of Great Britain, has moved into the lead for the Volvo World Cup after winning the opening speed leg yesterday on the 49-year-old Virtual Village Grannusch.

Whitaker, the winner in 1990 and 1991 on Milton, had the disadvantage of going first in the 41-strong competition but produced such a fast and faultless round that none of the 40 who followed — including Hugo Simon, of Austria, on ET, the defending champion — could match his performance. It is the first time in the 20-year history of the World Cup that the first leg has been won from the front.

"If I had to do it again, I'd try to ride it exactly the same. Whitaker, 42, said, "I thought my time was beatable — I just hoped I would be in the top five."

The two favourites, Ludger Beerbaum, of Germany, and Simon both incurred four faults at fence No 2. Rodrigo Pessoa, of Brazil, and Lars Nieberg, of Germany, came closest to Whitaker's time to take second and third places.

The most influential fence was No 7a, a triple bar off a corner, which numbered Michael Whitaker among its many victims. His horse, Two Step, had also spooked at the mass of blue flowers decorating the fences.

Geoff Billington and It's Otto, the only other British riders here, were caught out by the difficult striding between fence No 11 and the combination that followed. Billington tried to do it on a short four strides instead of a long three and ended with eight faults.

John Whitaker's copybook round has persuaded him to use the gelding again for the second round tonight, rather than the younger but less experienced Hayman. If he maintains his form, Whitaker, whose chances of success had looked slim, will be within sight of his third World Cup.

GOLF: ELDER BROTHER HAS FIRST HOLE IN ONE BUT STILL TRAILS SIBLING BY FOUR

Lynn begins to restore balance

FROM MEL WEBB IN CANNES

THERE is nothing quite like a bit of good, old-fashioned sibling rivalry to pep up the rhythms of family life, but for those living in the middle of it, it can get horribly tedious. Take the Lynn family, of Billings, in the North Midlands, for example. It contains two brothers, Simon, three years younger than David; both are golf professionals. They are similar in many ways, but what distinguishes Lynn Minor from his big brother is his uncanny ability to have holes in one. Yesterday Lynn Major went some way to restoring the balance.

David Lynn had played four holes in the first round of the Cannes Open here when his big moment came. On the par-3 5th he drew a seven-iron

boasting that he'd got another one. Perhaps this will shut him up for a bit. Fat chance, David — he is still leading 5-1. The ultimate golf stroke helped Lynn, in his first full season on the PGA European Tour after finishing seventh on last year's Challenge circuit, to share the lead on 67, four under par, with Jeff Remsey, of France, Robert Allenby, of Australia, and the Indian, Jeev Milkha Singh, one ahead of Peter Lonard and Wayne Westner.

Holes in one on the European Tour are surprisingly common, but the odds of having two in a round go beyond the merely astronomical. Lynn, 24, almost did it here — his six-iron tee-shot on the 8th stopped only six inches from the hole. If it had gone in, brother Simon, a Hippo Tour player, would have been silenced for ever.

Lynn's career has not proceeded at anything like the same pace as that of a former team-mate in the England Youth amateur team, Lee Westwood, who was beaten by Lynn in the quarter-finals of the English Amateur championship at Saunton five years ago, but has since gone on to win large bundles of currency all over the planet while Lynn has struggled to make a name for himself. With one stroke, he at least ensured that he will henceforth be a little more famous in his own family.

Lynn had three birdies and a solitary bogey in addition to the ace that he drew from his pack. It had been a decent sort of a round, he said with a slightly insouciant air. Not too many mistakes, nothing in the way of a calamity. Even the bogey had been the result of a small stroke of ill-fortune in that he found himself in a bunker which all bunkers need above all else — sand. The result was a thinned shot that sent the ball skittering all but out of control across the green. A missed eight-foot putt did not help, either.

Lynn and the others who put themselves atop the leaderboard did well to combat some awful conditions. This is the French Riviera, where the sun is supposed to shine, surly clouds, rain, biting cold and a blustery wind are not the idea at all. Cannes? This was more like Skellig in November. Ross, who reached the semi-final of the Amateur Championship last summer, was one stroke behind, paying for a poor

second round, a 76. He bounced back by equalling the lowest score of the day in the third round, a 68, but it was too late. Simon Robinson, from Seaton Carew, also had a 68, Jamie Elson, the son of Pip, was third, one stroke behind Griffiths.

Rose's first victory in this event was a good effort. He had everything to lose in the sense that, as the player with the lowest handicap, he was expected to win and in view of his flight this morning to Perth, Australia, to represent Europe in a Ryder Cup-style, amateur competition against southern Asia and the Pacific.

"This is a nice tournament, prestigious, and I have not won it before," Rose said. "I know a lot of people expected me to win, but there are a lot of good youngsters playing."

If there was one hole where Rose made sure of victory, it was the long 15th. He had dropped four strokes in the previous six holes and Ken, his father, who was pulling his trolley, was looking worried. But Rose birdied and sank a 15-foot putt for a birdie on the 17th as well. Not even hitting a past and the present president of the English Golf Union with his drive at the last could stop him winning.



Andrew Coltart hides his face in disbelief after taking a double-bogey five at the 2nd

Rose lives up to his billing

JUSTIN ROSE, the 17-year-old prodigy whom Peter McEvoy rates the equal at this stage in his career of Nick Faldo and everybody since, fully won the McEvoy Trophy, pulling clear of his rivals at Copt Heath with a burst late in the third and final round that was worthy of his status as a Walker Cup player (John Hopkins writes). Rose had a last round of 71, level par, and a 54-hole total of 215, two over par.

David Griffiths, who reached the semi-final of the Amateur Championship last summer, was one stroke behind, paying for a poor

second round, a 76. He bounced back by equalling the lowest score of the day in the third round, a 68, but it was too late. Simon Robinson, from Seaton Carew, also had a 68, Jamie Elson, the son of Pip, was third, one stroke behind Griffiths.

Time catches up on Faldo and Norman

JOHN HOPKINS



Golf Commentary

Golf can resemble boxing in the way in which two competitors can turn a tournament into a personal contest. This is what Tom Watson and Jack Nicklaus did at Turnberry in the 1977 Open, when they had a thrilling duel before Watson won by one stroke. Hubert Green was third, 11 strokes behind. A more recent example occurred in the Masters two years ago, when Nick Faldo and Greg Norman were, to all intents and purposes, the only combatants on the final afternoon. Norman, who had begun with a six-stroke lead, eventually lost to Faldo by five shots. It was one of the most remarkable collapses in sport, never mind golf. At Augusta last week, the thought occurred: did they take so much out of each other that their careers effectively ended there?

The evidence suggests that they have been emotionally spent ever since. Neither survived for more than two rounds at the 1997 or 1998 Masters. Each has missed the cut in three of the eight major championships since 1996.

Faldo, who will be 41 in July, cannot summon up his competitive desire in the way he once could. Split as he is between Europe and the United States, he cuts something of a forlorn figure at times. He talks of practising hard, of his game improving, yet the reality is that Colin Montgomerie overtook Faldo as Europe's leading contender in major championships some time ago and now Lee Westwood has passed him, too.

sports, there is, nonetheless, a moment when Father Time blows the whistle. For Johnny McDermott it came soon after he had won the US Opens of 1911 and 1912. He never won anything after that. Tony Jacklin, who had won the 1969 Open and 1970 US Open, was never the same after Lee Trevino had chipped in on the 71st hole of the 1972 Open at Muirfield. Jacklin, then 28, was finished.

The exception remains Jack Nicklaus, who was first written off in the late Seventies, only to return, aged 40, with victories in two major championships in three months in 1980 — the US Open and the US PGA.

He was written off again in the next few years, only to win the Masters in 1986 when he was 46. One is scared to say anything about Nicklaus because there he was again at Augusta last Sunday, when Norman and Faldo had long since quit the scene, challenging for the lead at the age of 58. Nicklaus is astonishing.

I hope that Faldo still has one last major championship in him. I admire Norman, too, and were he to win a third major it would be no more than he deserves. To be a footnote in golfing history is a harsh judgment on such a talented man. But if either wins another major championship it will be a surprise. The 1996 Masters finished them both off.

HOCKEY: CHANCES OF UNIQUE TREBLE DAMAGED BY ENGLAND COACH'S RULING

Slough stripped of internationals

SLOUGH will be missing five international players for the EHA Cup semi-final against Loughborough Students on April 26. But Sue Chandler, the captain, said that they would not boycott the tie.

The loss of England's best players follows a ruling by Maggie Souyave, the national coach, that the World Cup squad must sit out the rest of the domestic season.

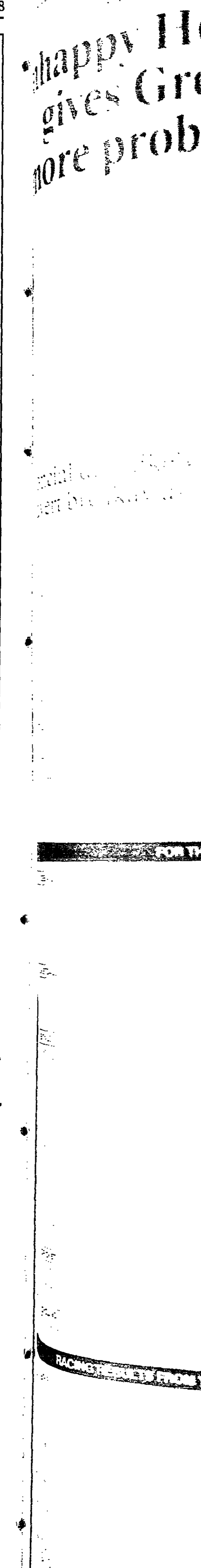
Stephen Barlow, the competitions and events manager at the English Hockey Association, said that there were no plans to change the dates for the semi-finals or the final on May 10.

Slough, who are on course for a unique domestic treble, will be without Karen Brown, Jane Smith and Mandy Nicholls, along with Sue MacDonald, of Scotland, and Sarah Kelleher, of Ireland, who also have international commitments. Hightown, the cup-holders, who are drawn away to Clifton in a repeat of last year's final, will lose Tina Cullen, their captain and striker, and Carolyn Reid, their goalkeeper.

Advertisement for Ferrari 328 GTB. Includes text: 'WIN A CLASSIC FERRARI 328 GTB', 'ENTER FOR THE SAN MARINO GRAND PRIX TODAY', 'RESULTS OF THE ARGENTINE GRAND PRIX', 'MAKE THREE SELECTIONS FROM EACH OF THE FOUR GROUPS BELOW', 'DRIVERS', 'CONSTRUCTORS', 'FANTASY FORMULA ONE 24 HOUR ENTRY LINE: 0891 40 50 01', 'CHANGING TIMES'.

LEGAL & PUBLIC NOTICES

Legal notices section containing various court orders, company notices, and public notices. Includes text: 'MAYNARD LIMITED ON RECEIVERSHIP', 'NOTICE IN HERBY GIVEN THAT...', 'PUBLIC NOTICES', 'NOTICE OF THE DOCTOR LARY...', 'NOTICE IN HERBY GIVEN THAT...'



FOOTBALL

Unhappy Howells gives Gross more problems

By Matt Dickinson and David Maddock

CHRISTIAN GROSS'S authority at Tottenham Hotspur has been undermined by another scathing attack from one of his players. Spurs travel to Barnsley tomorrow for a crucial game in their struggle to stay in the FA Cup...

earlier this year may be behind Gross's decision. The 30-year-old, who has played more than 250 league games for Spurs, could expect a lucrative move under the Bosman ruling in the summer...

Financial deal likely to avert breakaway

By John Goodbody

THE threat of a split in the Football League receded yesterday as the 72 member clubs moved towards agreement. David Sheepshanks, the League's chairman, said that he was "very hopeful" of reaching a settlement in two weeks' time...

Deakin turns dream into reality

By Mark Souster

YOU can forget Francois Pienaar, Philippe Sella or even Michael Lynagh. Without doubt, Saracens' most influential signing of recent times has been Peter Deakin. Peter who? Deakin, 44, is the club's sales and marketing director...

Worry over Bracken

KYRAN BRACKEN may miss the England summer tour to the southern hemisphere because of a recurring shoulder injury. Ireland announced yesterday that Keith Wood, their captain and the Harlequins hooker, and Jeremy Davidson, the second-row forward who has missed the whole of this season, will not tour South Africa this summer...



The vision and drive of Deakin have ensured a packed Vicarage Road on Sunday. Photograph: Hugh Routledge

SPORT IN BRIEF

Top players in call to oust board

SNOKER: A group of prominent players, which includes four former world champions yesterday formally called for the removal of the board of the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association (WPBSA)...

BOWLS: Peter Fish, a 50-year-old sports facilities supplier from Glendale in Arizona, appeared to have made a wasted journey to the Professional Bowls Association (PBA) play-offs at Blackpool this week...

HOCKEY: Simon Mason, England's first-choice goalkeeper for the World Cup in Holland next month, will not play in the European challenge, a three-day tournament starting today at the Southgate Hockey Centre...

FOR THE RECORD

Table with multiple columns listing sports results: BASEBALL, BASKETBALL, BOWLS, CRICKET, CYCLING, FOOTBALL, GOLF, HOCKEY, RUGBY UNION, RUGBY LEAGUE, SHOOTING, TENNIS, and WRESTLING.

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WINNING MOVES

Chess puzzle section titled 'WINNING MOVES' by Raymond Keene. Includes a chessboard diagram and text: 'White to play. This position is from the game Poliakov - Glasiev, St Petersburg, 1998. Can you see the classical combination that White used to deliver a quick checkmate?'.

BRIDGE

Bridge section titled 'SHEEHAN ON BRIDGE' by Robert Sheehan. Includes text: 'Over the next few months I will be conducting a beginner's course in the Refreshers column. So put the word out - lessons are available in The Times on Fridays for 35p. After the first few lessons there will be material that I hope regular readers of the Refreshers will find interesting.'

BRIDGE

Bridge section titled 'KEENE ON CHESS' by Raymond Keene. Includes text: 'Although in the mid-19th century the British school, led by Howard Staunton, had begun to elaborate a strategic approach to chess, the ordre du jour elsewhere was haphazard tactics and attacks conjured from nowhere.'

RACING RESULTS FROM YESTERDAY'S THREE MEETINGS

Racing results table for Newmarket, Cheltenham, and Ripon. Columns include race name, horse name, jockey, and odds.

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Battered women still on a hiding to nothing

Mummy's been naughty. That's what happens to naughty people," as the man said to the little girl after he'd knocked her mother to the ground and kicked her head. There are two reasons why people do things they know to be wrong: 1) They want to; 2) They think they will get away with it. If you are the sort of chap who gets off on punching your wife or girlfriend senseless, go ahead. According to last night's *Dispatches* (C4), you can do whatever you want to her without fear of any serious repercussions. Even Dr Mengele might have been envious.

Recent changes to the law should have put battered women in a stronger position, but, we were told, they haven't. The police are slow to act or won't act at all. When they do, they are often hopelessly ineffective. Magistrates let men walk free even when they have committed vicious and repeated

assaults. The partners of abusive husbands/buyers might as well be medieval serfs.

But it was the pretzels for the attacks that really got you. No dumplings in my sausage casserole? Where's my blowtorch? Tin of beans falling the wrong way? Get the chainsaw! Of course, these "reasons" are irrelevant. It has nothing to do with female misbehaviour and everything to do with a desperate, irrational, emotionally malformed need to control.

The testimony from the women covering anonymously in refuges unprotected by the law, severed from their former lives, was that the jaw-breakers, slashers, fustic-killing stomach-kickers, must assert total control at all times. They told them when and if they could go out or even to the lavatory. They made them sleep on the floor or eat from a mat like a dog.


The programme drew on what the producers claimed was the

largest and most detailed survey ever in this country of battered women's experiences. It sought to explain why they didn't go to the police or to the courts.

But apparently it's difficult to walk out when you are locked in the house, or chained to the bed. If you complain to the police and your "partner" comes back from a night in the cells and beats the stuffing out of you, you may be reluctant to go again. If you have been told repeatedly by a man who regularly attacks you that he will kill you if you talk, you may actually believe him.

I may have done this documentary the disservice of making it sound more lurid than it was. In the era of pointless fly-on-the-walls and gawping at someone or other "From Hell", this was a model of good, old-fashioned, responsible investigative journalism. It had impressive original

REVIEW



Paul Hoggart

research, compelling testimony and the right questions put to people who knew what they were talking about.

And it had the simple, strong point to make, that a lot of this could be avoided if these closed concentration camp guards thought they might get brought to book. It was not comfortable, "entertaining" or funny — excellent television, in fact. Next week's second

part is about battered women and the legal system. I expect it will be even more baffling and infuriating.

Doctors at Large (BBC2) provided a complete contrast in every significant respect. Apart from the fact that it was about nice young people who wanted to repair bodies, rather than damage them, it provided us with a glimpse of the far end of the current moribund trend for docu-soaps.

The programmes pick up on the careers of a group of doctors last seen as medical students in a 1984 series *Doctors To Be*, which provided most of last night's material. Medical students have a bit of a reputation — all those practical jokes with severed limbs and macabre drunken pranks — but this was all revision, earnest chats, anatomy vivas and feeling squeamish over your first incision.

It was non-judgmental and dissectionless as this genre usually is,

but also innocently unsensational by contemporary standards and consequently rather dull. We had mere glimpses of the doctors today, but there were hints that some of them have been finding life very difficult. Perhaps more interesting material awaits.

A neighbour of my brother has just made himself a fortune with a novel about cloning Jesus from the Turin Shroud. Around the world you can hear the thud of leather on flesh as writers and would-be blockbuster millionaires kick themselves for not thinking of that one.

In a market where writers stretch and strain to twist some preposterous contrivance into gripping plausibility, this is a coup of stunning simplicity. Sadly the same could not be said of *October* (ITV), which writhed to death last night.

Why should an international

pharmaceutical corporation have its headquarters in a mountain-top fortress? Why should they keep packs of vicious, wolf-like dogs in cages, looked after by a bulging-eyed psychopath? Why should their decisions about worldwide product promotions be taken by one young woman, apparently alone? Why would she choose to flood the world market with a drug that drives people mad?

I had lots more of these questions, especially about the supposed effects of the drug, but I had stopped caring. It may be difficult to think of a really spooky plot, but that is no excuse for being silly.

The director relied on atmospheric effects to paper over the canyons in the scenario, and we had endless lapses into a terrible parody induced by the drug, all grey and cold and sinister. The drug proved able to bring the dead heroine back to life, but could not do the same for the plot.

BBC1

6.00am Business Breakfast (25807)

7.00 BBC Breakfast News (79291)

9.00 Good Living Last in series (987838)

9.25 *Kilroy* (1) (4298254)

10.05 Style Challenge (7460291)

10.30 *Can't Cook, Won't Cook* (1) (5548494)

10.55 The Really Useful Show (1) (9330611)

11.35 The General from Southampton General hospital (4063272)

12.00 News (1) (2417291)

12.05pm The Entertainment Game (3709524)

12.35 *Wipeout* (5142956)

1.00 News (1) and weather (87678)

1.30 Regional News (1) (9894123)

1.40 The Weather Show (64458253)

1.45 Neighbours (1) (82831307)

2.10 *Inside* (1) (9175036)

3.00 *Lion Country* Pelican-keeper Mark Tye eagerly awaits a consignment of the birds for his bright breeding programme (76265)

3.30 *Playdays* (1297630)

3.50 The Littlest Pet Shop (9403814)

4.00 *Bodger and Badger* (7251814)

4.15 *Bear's Klipper's POV* New series (2152678)

4.35 *Classica Explains It All* (8572388)

5.00 *Newsworld* (1) (5785036)

5.10 *Blue Peter* (1) (521217)

5.33 *World Book Day* (280901)

5.35 *Neighbours* (1) (1) (262104)

6.00 News (1) and weather (524)

6.30 Regional News (1) (104)

7.00 *Weekend Watchdog* with Anne Robinson Consumer Investigations, with reporters Johnathan Maitland, Edward Enfield and Sam Ockley (1) (4746)

7.30 *Top of the Pops* Videos and live performances of the latest chart sounds introduced by Jo Whalley (1) (388)

8.00 *Confessions* New series. Revamped version of the revelations show hosted by Simon Mayo (3494)

8.30 A Question of Sport Scotland goalkeeper Jim Johnston, cross-country runner Paula Radcliffe, British Lions centre Graeme Towers and world speedway champion Greg Hancock join Sus Barker, John Parrot and ally McColist (1) (2801)

9.00 *Nine O'Clock News* (1) regional news and weather (8291)

9.30 *Drop Zone* (1994) Action thriller, with Wesley Snipes, Gary Busey and Yancy Butler. A tough cop teams up with a professional skydiver to capture a computer hacker who has escaped from police custody by planting a bomb on board a plane and parachuting to safety. Directed by John Badham (95185)

WALLES: 9.30 *Ball at the Hall* New series. Michael Ball and Lesley Garrett perform at St David's Hall in Cardiff (62727)

10.00 *FILM: Drop Zone* (370253)

11.40 *FILM: Renegades* (581727)

1.15am News (222654)

1.20 *BBC News 24*

11.10 *Renegades* (1988) Undercover cop Kiefer Sutherland and naive American Lou Diamond Phillips try to recover a tribal artefact stolen by a killer. Directed by Jack Sholder (289562)

12.45am *Weather* (4239470)

12.50 *BBC News 24*

BBC2

6.35am The Third Revolution (6051456)

7.00 *Teletubbies* (1) (2631727)

7.25 *Skippy* (1) (2843562)

7.50 *World of Woody Kowalski* (1) (2180433)

8.10 *Peter Pan and the Pirates* (9645253)

8.35 *Yogi's Treasure Hunt* (1) (4470388)

9.00 *Activ8* (1) (1) (37543)

9.30 *Sweet Valley High* (351058)

9.50 *The Philbert the Frog* (1) (1702272)

10.10 *Teletubbies* (28399)

10.30 *The World's Greatest Athlete* (1973) Disney adventure, with Jan-Michael Vincent. A high-school coach on an African holiday discovers an athletic prodigy and takes him back to America to turn around the fortunes of his hapless sports team. Directed by Robert Scheerer (8348833)

12.05pm *The Phil Silvers Show* (1) (3727001)

12.30 *Working Lunch* (73853)

1.00 *Funnybones* (1) (6127291)

1.05 *Bananaman* (1) (61271562)

1.10 *The Art and Antiques Hour* (1) (5005368)

2.10 *Wear It Well* (1) (29178859)

2.25 *Racing from Newbury* Live coverage of the 2.40, 3.10, and 4.30 races (1552901)

3.55 *News* (1) (3564475)

4.00 *Real Rooms* (1) (3541524)

4.25 *Easter, Steady, Cook* (3544611)

4.55 *Easter, David Bellamy* (58777)

5.30 *Today's Big Day* (253)

6.00 *The Simpsons* (1) Homer resolves to become a model father (544611)

6.25 *Star Trek* (1) (1) (514036)

7.15 *Electric Circus* Toby Ansell chats to Gwyneth Paltrow and Ethan Hawke about their latest film *Great Expectations* and Louise goes back stage at the musical *Saturday Night Fever* (763104)

7.30 *The Write Stuff* Last in the series for budding authors with advice from Ernest Hemingway, Lawrence Durrell, Kurt Vonnegut and J.R.R. Tolkien (1) (630)

8.00 *Coast to Coast* Janet Street-Porter concludes her trek in Conwy (1) (1038)

8.30 *Gardeners' World* Alan Titchmarsh plants bluebells, primroses and foxgloves in his wildlife garden (1) (4253)

9.00 *Bottom* (1) (1) (6533)

9.30 *Never Mind the Buzzcocks* Justin Curry, May-Anne Hobbs, Billy Bragg and Jonathan Ross are the guests in the last of the music quiz (60388)

Host Angus Deayton (10.00pm)

10.00 *Have I Got News for You* New series of the satirical quiz, with team captains Paul Merton and Ian Hislop and Angus Deayton (58038)

10.30 *Newsnight* (1) (785185)

11.15 *Later with Jools Holland* Specialized, the London Community Gospel Choir. Bernard Butler, Jimmy Webb (184811)

12.15am *My New Gun* (1992) Black comedy drama with Diane Lane, and James LeGros. Directed by Stacy Cochran (1) (643983)

1.50 *Space: Above and Beyond* (1375296)

2.55 *Weather* (7167437)

HTV

6.00am GMTV (1346765)

9.25 *Batman: The Animated Series* (9675291)

9.50 *Bugs Bunny: Lunar Tunes* (1) (8651185)

10.20 *News* (8895765)

10.25 *Regional News* (849036)

10.30 *Black Beauty* (1971) with Mark Lester, Walter Szlezak and Ursula Glas. The adventures of a young colt. Directed by James Hill (1) (63740611)

12.20pm *Regional News* (2421494)

12.30 *News* (1) and weather (77658)

1.00 *Wish You Were Here?* (1) (1) (74748)

1.30 *Home and Away* (1) (69303)

2.00 *The Jerry Springer Show* (2815368)

2.45 *WALLES: Get Gardening* (1) (716088)

2.45 *Garden Calendar* (1) (716098)

3.15 *News* (1) (2148524)

3.20 *Regional News* (1) (2178765)

3.25 *Rosie and Jim* (1) (2168388)

3.35 *Caroline* (1) (9426630)

3.45 *Paddington Bear* (1) (9417017)

3.50 *Ozdie the Owl* (9498982)

4.00 *Magic with Everything* New series (7246882)

4.15 *Extreme Dinosaurs* (218098)

4.40 *Crazy Cottage* (9412123)

5.10 *A Country Practice* (1661017)

5.40 *News* (1) and weather (145098)

6.00 *Home and Away* (1) (1) (571785)

6.25 *Wales Tonight* (1) (789559)

6.25 *HTV Weather* (172543)

6.30 *The West Tonight* (1) (272)

7.00 *Bruce Forsyth's Play Your Cards Right* (1) (8814)

7.30 *Coronation Street* Deirdre receives the answer to her prayers (1) (458)

8.00 *My Wonderful Life* Return of the gentle comedy drama with Emma Wray (1) (8562)

8.30 *The Bill* Deakin leads an investigation into a male rape (1) (4369)

Clive James, Mel Gibson (9.00pm)

9.00 *Clive James Meets Mel Gibson* Clive James spends ten days in the company of the Australian star (1) (9272)

10.00 *News* (1) and weather (45562)

10.30 *Regional News* (808185)

10.40 *Dharma and Greg* Dharma, Larry and Abby liberate a turkey farm in time for Thanksgiving (1) (921833)

11.10 *Friday Night Fever* (1) (254340)

11.40 *Renegade* (575920)

12.40 *am Pop Down the Pub* (7173234)

1.15 *War of the Worlds* (1) (3748215)

2.05 *Not Fade Away* (1) (5718302)

3.05 *Collins and Mason's Movie Club* (1) (9173867)

3.30 *Murder, She Wrote* (2025895)

4.25 *Coach* (4231673)

4.45 *Nightvision* (5069147)

5.00 *Coronation Street* (1) (88418)

5.30 *News* (78944)

CENTRAL

As HTV West except:

1.30pm *The Jerry Springer Show* (593104)

2.45-3.15 *Surprise Gardens* (716098)

5.10-5.40 *Shortland Street* (1661017)

6.25-7.00 *Central News* (789559)

10.40 *Central Weekend Live* (72526543)

12.15pm *God's Gift* (794037)

1.15 *Pop Down the Pub* (58128)

1.45 *Robocop* (4400050)

2.40 *SPX* (9034055)

3.05 *World Football* (85173857)

3.30 *Planet Hit* (46925)

4.00 *Vanessa* (4467078)

4.35 *Central Jobfinder '98* (7051383)

5.20 *Asian Eye* (4571383)

WESTCOUNTRY

As HTV West except:

12.15pm *Westcountry News* (6607524)

12.27-12.30 *A Journey Through Easter* (2421494)

1.30 *The Jerry Springer Show* (593104)

2.45-3.15 *Westcountry Update* (716098)

5.10-5.40 *Home and Away* (1661017)

6.00-7.00 *Westcountry Live* (85678)

10.40 *Westcountry News* (822765)

10.45 *Dharma and Greg* (732122)

11.15-11.45 *Friday Night Fever* (887433)

11.45 *Renegade* (83456)

MERIDIAN

As HTV West except:

12.15-12.30 *Meridian News and Weather* (6607524)

1.00-1.30 *Shortland Street* (74746)

2.45-3.15 *Put It to the Test* (716098)

5.10-5.40 *Home and Away* (1661017)

6.00-7.00 *Meridian Tonight* (85678)

11.40 *Charlie Grace* (575920)

5.00am *Freescreen* (88418)

ANGLIA

As HTV West except:

12.19pm *Anglia Air Watch* (2492982)

2.45-3.15 *Great Little Gardens* (716098)

5.10-5.40 *Shortland Street* (1661017)

6.23 *Anglia Weather* (173272)

6.25-7.00 *Anglia News* (786558)

10.29 *Anglia Air Watch* (218607)

SAC

Starts: 7.00am *The Bigger Breakfast* (82901)

9.00 *Mosha* (4927185)

9.35 *The Secret World of Alex Mack* (850678)

10.10 *Saved by the Bell: The New Class* (7473765)

10.40 *City Guys* (5510611)

11.10 *Madison* (9454307)

11.40 *The Bigger Breakfast* (2191369)

12.00pm *Piled Lake* (42475)

12.30 *Sesame Street* (889011)

1.00 *Sit Meethru* (8306172)

1.15 *Tomas y Tanc* (6305982)

1.30 *Gustav the Man of Moods* (64483008)

1.35 *FILM: I Was Monty's Double* (86740067)

3.30 *Collectors' Lot* (678)

4.00 *Fifteen-to-One* (1) (185)

4.30 *Courtroom* (1) (856727)

4.55 *Rick Lake* (1) (7052104)

5.30 *Bewitched* (1) (1) (949)

11.45 *News* (1) (1) (616455)

12.40am *Pond Life* (1) (1) (2126019)

12.55 *Jo Whalley* (1) (9888215)

1.10 *Planet Football* (1) (1) (2307692)

2.40 *Back Street Dreams* (1990) Brooke Shields and Jason O'Malley. A debt collector dabbles in crime while trying to bring up his autistic son. Directed by Rupert Hitzig (515835)

4.25 *Step Lively*, Jeeves (1939, b/w) Comedy with Arthur Treacher as not book-based. Directed by Eugene Ford (3237857)

CHANNEL 4

7.00am *The Bigger Breakfast* (62901)

9.00 *Mosha* (4927185)

9.35 *The Secret World of Alex Mack* (850678)

10.10 *Saved by the Bell: The New Class* (7473765)

10.40 *City Guys* (5510611)

11.10 *Madison* (9454307)

11.40 *The Bigger Breakfast* (2191369)

12.00pm *Sesame Street* (889011)

1.00 *Sit Meethru* (8306172)

1.15 *Tomas y Tanc* (6305982)

1.30 *Gustav the Man of Moods* (64483008)

1.35 *FILM: I Was Monty's Double* (86740067)

3.30 *Collectors' Lot* (678)

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6.00am *5 News Early* (2843494)

7.00 *WideWorld* (1) (1519036)

7.30 *Milkshake!* (1) (558678)

7.35 *Wimze's House* (1) (884746)

8.00 *Havakoz* (1) (8003940)

8.30 *Wishbone* (1) (8003940)

9.00 *Espresso* (9720475)

10.00 *Woodland Tales* (1) (1) (7921901)

10.30 *Sunset Beach* (1) (168899)

11.10 *Lesca* (886185)

12.00 *5 News* (1) (8010456)

12.30pm *Family Affairs* (1) (1) (1924748)

1.00 *The Bold and the Beautiful* (1) (1518307)

1.30 *Sons and Daughters* (1923017)

2.00 *Burke's Law: Who Killed Skippy's Master?* (7322303)

3.00 *100 Per Cent Good* (8694982)

3.30 *A Little Romance* (1979) Romantic comedy with Laurence Llewellyn Duna Lane, Sally Kellerman and Arthur Hill. Directed by George Roy Hill (986030)

5.30 *Was It Good for You?* (1) (1) (6402036)

6.00 *100 Per Cent Good* (8694982)

6.30 *Family Affairs* Liam introduces Nick to the new 'buddies' yard security guard (1) (9433001)

7.00 *5 News* (1) (8619291)

7.30 *Wildlife SOS* Napoleon, the one-eyed heret is returned to the wild; and the deer who was brought in after a road accident is also released (1) (6489185)

8.00 *Fame and Fortune*: The home life of singer Neil Sedaka (1) (8665611)

8.30 *Was It Good for You?* Barcelona (8614746)

9.00 *Quest for Justice* (1993) Jane Seymour lights as a 1950s newspaperwoman who sets up one of the first black newspapers in the South. Directed by James Keach (86913369)

Eric Roberts stars (10.50pm)

10.50 *C-16* FBI New twelve-part series about a Los Angeles-based FBI unit starring Eric Roberts (897791)

11.45 *Criminal Hearts* (1995) Thriller with Amy Locane and Kevin Dillon. Directed by Dave Payne (8962253)

1.35am *Firebrecker* (1988) Western with James Stewart, Henry Fonda and Ed Begley. Directed by Vincent McVey (8274654)

3.20 *The Gold Rush* (1924, b/w) Tim Allen comedy starring and directed by Charlie Chaplin (94303073)

4.30 *The Road* (9278893)

4.40 *Prisoner: Cell Block H* (2435505)

5.30 *100 Per Cent Good* (1) (9778012)

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Presenter Chris Evans (6.00pm)

6.00 *TFI Friday* Chris Evans talks to Whoopi Goldberg and Raed Gullif. Music comes from Kula Shaker and The Mighty Mighty Bosstones (78920)

7.00 *Channel 4 News* (1) (316253)

7.55 *Mensaj Moments* Life as a young black boy in the 1930s (849746)

8.00 *Wishbone* Visit by the Gardener: Meadows Carol Klein attempts to persuade people to welcome wildlife and wild flowers back into their gardens (1) (6104)

8.30 *Brookside* Has Kyle survived her ideal? Ben's agony reduces young tearaway Tinhead to tears (1) (5611)

9.00 *Ellen*: Reversal of Fortune Ellen is determined to get her parents to start their new lives away from her house (1) (191)

9.30 *Father Time*: Kicking Bishop Brennan up the tree. A lost bet has serious consequences for Ted (1) (88765)

10.00 *Fraser*: Room Service A visit by Lilli stirs up old feelings for Fraser, new ones for Niles (1) (43104)

10.30 *King of the Hill* Hank attempts to land a big contract (1) (927843)

11.05 *The Adam and Joe Show* (1) (253611)

11.35 *TFI Friday* (1) (861455)

12.40am *Pond Life* (1) (1) (2126019)

12.55 *Jo Whalley* (1) (9888215)

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RUGBY LEAGUE 42
Clarke reaches another summit at Central Park

SPORT

RACING 43

Xaar underlines classic potential in Craven Stakes



FRIDAY APRIL 17 1998

Club asks for Gascoigne's release

Robson's plea puts Hoddle in quandary

By DAVID MADDOCK

ENGLAND'S preparation for the World Cup finals, it seems, is destined to be a turbulent affair. The first ripples were cast yesterday by Bryan Robson with a plea to Glenn Hoddle, the England coach.

Robson, the Middlesbrough manager, wants Hoddle to ignore Paul Gascoigne for England's game against Portugal next week. The midfielder player, he argues, is needed more by his club than his country.

At the heart of Robson's case is Middlesbrough's attempt to win promotion to the FA Carling Premiership. Starting this evening with the visit of Manchester City, the North-East club has four matches remaining in which to secure an automatic promotion spot.

Gascoigne is expected to be fit for tonight but Robson wants Hoddle to ignore the midfielder player for the game against Portugal — even though the England manager is desperate to give the man he

sees as a key player an international run-out. Middlesbrough have a game at Port Vale next Friday, just 48 hours after the international. Robson said: "I am going to contact Glenn to find out what his intentions are. It would suit me if Paul didn't play. We're at Port Vale on the Friday and I want him to be fresh for that game."

Robson will clearly bring pressure to bear on his international counterpart but that will place Hoddle in a difficult position. He wants the central midfielder player to have as many games for England as possible between now and the end of the regular season — especially with the prospect of play-offs looming.

Middlesbrough are in fourth place in the table, on the same number of points as Sunderland in second, but have an inferior goals-scored tally. Two wins over Easter have boosted their cause, but they have a tricky run-in, and

Sunderland are favourites to gain the second automatic promotion spot behind Nottingham Forest. If Gascoigne were to take part in the play-offs, he would miss an England match against Saudi Arabia, and two warm-up games in Morocco. Hoddle has hinted that this would severely jeopardise the player's chances of making the final squad for France.

Robson's request will further exacerbate the situation, but the Middlesbrough manager has little option. After spending millions on new players, failure to be promoted would spell financial disaster.

Defeat this evening would have even more serious consequences for Manchester City, who have just three matches in which to save themselves from relegation. At present, they stand a point above the bottom three, but have a difficult run-in.

After visiting Middlesbrough, they entertain a Queens Park Rangers team also haunted by relegation, before visiting Stoke City on the final day of the season, a fixture in which the defeated club will probably be relegated.

Joe Royle, the City manager, was heartened by news that Ajax have returned with an improved offer for Georgi Kinkladze. City rejected a £3 million offer from the Dutch champions two weeks ago and have made it clear that the asking price is £5 million — a figure Royle believes will give him the financial muscle to rebuild his team next season.

"We have had a slightly improved offer from Ajax, which has not been accepted," Dennis Tueart, the City director, said. "But negotiations are ongoing now, relations have been resumed, and we understand the player's desire to join them."

Privately, Royle has indicated that he will do everything to facilitate a deal. He has never held the Georgian in high regard, and has not played him during City's relegation fight.



Rings a bell: Neil Smith halts the photocall yesterday to answer his mobile phone. Lara, their new captain, has been known to use his on the field

Lara flies in the face of expectation

By RICHARD HOBSON

BRIAN LARA has attracted many adjectives during his eventful career, but never predictable. Yesterday, he took his own employers by surprise by landing in England ahead of schedule — a schedule that had been redrawn when he delayed his previously planned arrival because of illness.

Originally, Warwickshire expected Lara at Edgbaston yesterday morning for a final practice before the county championship game against Durham today. Then, late on Wednesday night, he telephoned Dennis Amis, the chief executive, and told him that he was suffering from mild food poisoning and that

he would fly in from Barbados at six o'clock this morning instead.

Shortly before noon yesterday, though, Lara telephoned Amis from Heathrow to say that he was not only fit and well, but on his way to Birmingham in a taxi. It emerged that Phil Simmons, a West Indies colleague and Leicestershire's overseas player, had given Lara his seat on the plane because Leicester do not play in the opening round of matches.

Lara overcame fatigue to attend a sponsor's dinner last night after Peugeot announced a £250,000 deal with Warwickshire, believed to be the biggest for a single season.

"I'm very grateful to him [Simmons] because it was

important I was here today to meet the players, the sponsors and get settled in before the first game," Lara said.

Lara began his previous summer with Warwickshire four years ago by scoring six centuries in seven championship innings. The run culminated with his world record unbeaten 501 against Durham. Warwickshire's opponents today. In all he scored more than 2,000 runs at an average of just under 90 and helped the county to success in three of the four domestic competitions.

However, Lara's time-keeping was vague and he tested the patience of colleagues — most notably Dermot Reeve, then Warwickshire captain — and officials alike. This time,

he has the responsibility of recent Test and one-day series against England as well as a salary approaching £200,000 with bonuses to justify.

"We have to put aside what happened in 1994," Lara said. "It was a shock playing five or six days a week for five months, but I think I can handle it much better now."

"The public are going to come out wanting to see some good cricket not only from myself, but the Warwickshire team as a whole. The main thing I remember about the last time I played Durham was not only the 501, but that we only got first-innings points and we will want to do better than that this time."

Ominously, Lara felt as happy with his batting in the

recent Test and one-day series against England as at any time over the past two years. "I got back to the way I've wanted to bat for the last couple of years and, hopefully, I can extend it into the county season," he said. "I came here on a much higher note four years ago, but I have the same sort of enthusiasm I had then and I'm looking forward to getting going."

"People are bound to expect another bumper year like 1994 and you can't do anything about expectations. It's true Durham have been a good team for me whenever I've played against them, and I am looking for something special, but it does not have to be 502. Just a plain hundred will be fine."

Bobic has final word for resolute Stuttgart

A CLINICAL strike from Fredi Bobic, the Germany international forward, mid-way through the first half gave VfB Stuttgart a 1-0 win away to Lokomotiv Moscow yesterday and put them into the final of the Cup Winners' Cup, awaiting the winners of the match between Chelsea and Vicenza last night.

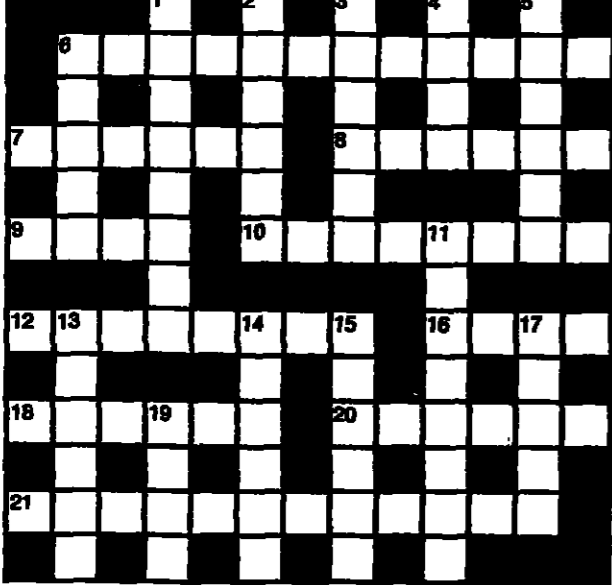
The Russians, seeking to overturn a 2-1 deficit from the first leg of the semi-final, were caught pushing up in numbers. Poschner dispossessed Smirnov inside the Stuttgart half and threaded a pass to Akporobio, who found his strike partner racing through on goal. Bobic, who had

scored an injury-time winner in the first leg, placed the ball past the advancing goalkeeper, Nigmatullin.

There was no way back for Lokomotiv, who had hoped to become a European final in 22 years. Despite intensive pressure, Frank Verlaat, Stuttgart's Dutch captain, and the rest of a solid defence rarely looked like cracking, although Yevgeny Khariachev, the veteran Russia international, might have equalised 13 minutes from time.

Verlaat will miss the final in Stockholm on May 13 after picking up a second yellow card near the end.

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 1382

- ACROSS**
- 6 One leaving work on the dot (5,7)
 - 7 Unspeaking (6)
 - 8 Dark and sad (6)
 - 9 A fruit, sounds like *dim-witted* (4)
 - 10 Unpaid (officer) (8)
 - 12 One-cell tiny organisms (8)
 - 16 Poor dwelling (4)
 - 18 Old thing to pack up troubles in (6)
 - 20 Peak (6)
 - 21 By chance (12)
- DOWN**
- 1 Change of position: campaign (8)
 - 2 Quick drawing (6)
 - 3 Strongman shorn by Deltah (6)
 - 4 A swindle (4)
 - 5 Panic: a *Reign of it*, 1794 (6)
 - 6 A cold: to cool (5)
 - 11 Be like (8)
 - 13 (Allotted) for each person (6)
 - 14 Teased: unjustified (margin) (6)
 - 15 Advantages (6)
 - 17 Concord: the number one (5)
 - 19 Runny Fr. cheese (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1381
ACROSS: 1 Consider 5 Peel 7 Red squirrel 8 Trap 9 Athens 10 Adepts 13 Pun 14 Torque 17 Domino 18 Lent 19 Star of David 20 Fray 21 Layabout
DOWN: 1 Contrast 2 Scept 3 Disrespectful 4 Rough-and-ready 5 Parole 6 Execut 7 Rather 11 Poised 12 Short-cut 15 Oyster 16 Quarry 18 Limb

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Davis a true sporting gentleman

FRED DAVIS, winner of the world snooker championship on eight occasions, died in his sleep in a Denbigh hospital late on Thursday evening.

The younger brother of Joe Davis and a universally admired elder statesman of the game in his own right was 84. Although inevitably overshadowed by Joe, undefeated as world champion from the event's inauguration in 1927 to his retirement from it in 1946, Fred achieved enough to be included among any discussion surrounding the greats of the green baize.

Yet it was much more than an impressive record on the table that stood him apart. His wealth of anecdotes, a pleasant disposition and a gentlemanly manner served to enhance his popularity.

Ted Lowe, for so long the voice of BBC snooker, paid tribute to Davis, saying: "He was a very happy-go-lucky person, a very pleasant man and one of the outstanding players of all time."

After realising in his 20s that he was suffering from myopia, Davis became the first player to employ the swivel lens, bifocal spectacles which, in later years, also developed into the trademark

Phil Yates hears the tributes for one of the finest players seen on the green baize

of Dennis Taylor, another who was sad to hear of his passing. "I can tell you from personal experience that Fred was a great competitor. He'll be badly missed," Taylor said.

Stephen Hendry, the six-times world champion, echoed those sentiments. "Fred was one of the legendary figures in our game," the Scot said.

Results improved in tandem with Davis's eyesight. In 1940 he pushed Joe hard, losing 37-35 in the final of the world championship before joining the Army, where he remained for the duration of the Second World War.

Davis won the first of his eight world titles in 1948 and the last in 1956. Although he never overcame Joe in the world championship, he did hold the unique distinction of being the only player to defeat him in a non-handicap professional event.

During the 1950s and 60s snooker's popularity waned, but, thanks to the advent of

colour television and the BBC series *Pot Black*, it enjoyed a spectacular revival. Davis, who had recovered from two heart attacks, significantly helped this process by reaching the semi-finals of the 1978 world championship, aged 64.

Three years later, Davis fulfilled a boyhood ambition by lifting the world professional billiards trophy, retaining it the following season. He did not retire until 1992 when, at 78, he was the oldest active professional sportsman in the world.

At the tail-end of a professional career spanning 62 years, the vast majority of his matches were qualifying rounds at the Norbreck Castle hotel, Blackpool. It was there as a rookie journalist, that I spent many enjoyable hours listening to the fascinating reminiscences of Mr Davis — I could never bring myself to address him as Fred.

Such as the time he arrived for an exhibition after a long drive to discover the absence of a table. "Oh," said the organiser. "We thought that you'd bring one with you."

"Fred was just a smashing bloke," John Spencer, a fellow former world champion, said. No one could argue.



Davis competed at a high level until his retirement at 78

BEST OF SPORT IN THE TIMES

TODAY AND TOMORROW

What is it that continues to drive Alex Ferguson? The Manchester United manager, right, talks of European ambitions, the need for change and life at and away from Old Trafford. The first of two interviews with Oliver Holt appears on page 46

TOMORROW

How do Saracens and Newcastle match up in the battle for rugby's Premiership title? David Hands assesses their strengths and weaknesses

PLUS

Top columnists — Danny Baker, Steve McNamara, Lawrence Dallaglio and Simon Barnes

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